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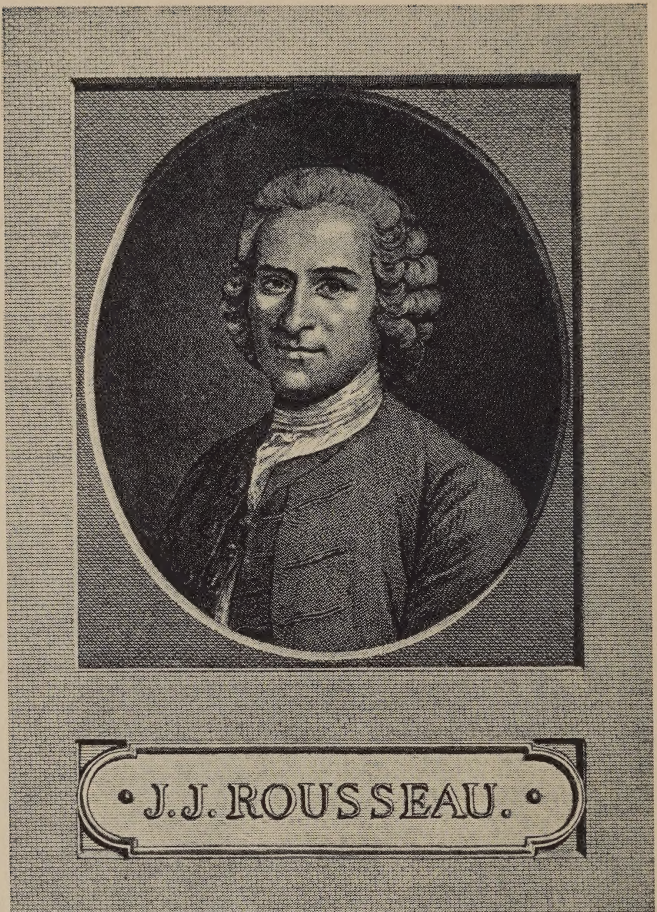

J.J. ROUSSEAU.

Jean Jacques Rousseau

AND HIS PHILOSOPHY

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WITH A NEW PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR

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This translation is dedicated
to the Living Spirit of

JOHANNE JENSEN

who had translated the first chapter of the original,
written by her teacher in philosophy, when
an accident stayed her pen

W.R.
L.E.S.

Deep springs do not run dry.

FINNISH PROVERB

Introduction

THE immense literature upon Rousseau is not only a demonstration of the wide interest that men have had in his ideas but also a proof of his place as one of the most influential figures of the past two centuries. We honor the men who solve the problems of human existence, but we give the highest praise to those who raise them. In this respect Rousseau was the first, in modern times, to state the problem of civilization effectively. It was he who made men aware of the ill effects of artificial culture, and the over-refinement, the wrongs, and injustice of civilization. His teachings revolutionized theories of government, methods of education, views of religion and the personal life, and inspired a new literary movement. He magnified the nature of the individual and his personality, and brought them into the center of interest. In this, as in the emphasis upon the feelings, on the equality of man, on human freedom, the cosmopolitan spirit, the interest in nature, the play upon sentiment, and the interpretation of morality and religion as matters of natural feeling, Rousseau was the master of the Romantic school.

The thinkers of the Enlightenment had glorified the sciences and the arts, civilization and progress, and had boasted of the achievements of the human race. They had emphasized reason and rule, knowledge and logic. Rousseau, in strong contrast to them, argued for the feelings, natural impulse, the conscience, and the innate goodness of man. In his debate before the Academy of Dijon, on the question as to whether the reëstablishment of the arts and sciences would purify manners, he declared the arts and the sciences were the fruits of luxury and indolence and the source of moral decay. He argued extremely and the violence of his argument was a slap in the face of the world. He demanded a return to the *naïveté* and simplicity of nature. Immediately he had leaped into the realm of literature and was recognized as a force to be reckoned with. In making his extreme statements he was not markedly original, but rather, on account of his sensitivity and the strength of his feelings, he was more aware of the undercurrents of the ideas of his time which to others remained obscure, and he perceived certain great principles to which they were blind.

In his attitude toward the problem of civilization, Rousseau was moved by a personal experience, an experience from which he emerged, he tells us, a new man in a new world. The question of the Dijon Academy had struck his mind like a flash of lightning. As he contemplated it he became suddenly aware of "the contrast between the state of society and civilization on the one hand, and the nature of man with his capacities and his needs on the other." In the development of this attitude, he not only showed the abuses of society but also pointed out how man might be brought back to the state of nature and made better. Society is evil and men are bad, he thought; but man is by nature good. Men are by nature equal, but civilization has corrupted their natural inclinations and produced the inequalities we everywhere observe. Man is born free, but the restraints of civilization pervert him. He has the natural instinct of self-preservation and the impulse to develop his capacities, but he is also prompted by sympathy for his fellows, and is imbued with religious feelings toward the Highest. He might become better than he is if he had a new education and a new social environment.

The new world of Rousseau's vision was the world of personality, the inner man, and his new man was the man of feeling as opposed to the reasoning man of the Enlightenment. For him, nature and intuitive feeling were the basis for all estimations of worth, and if a civilization was to be judged of value, it must be as a means of developing and perfecting the natural man. Therefore, education must perform both negative and positive functions,—it must clear the social environment of the hindrances to, and it must provide the way for, the natural unfolding of the powers of the individual. As man's worth depends on his moral nature, which consists essentially of feeling, he should be free to obey his native impulses. Rousseau desired a civilization that would give free reign to the spontaneous feelings of man, and a social life that would grant freedom, independence, and self-reliance to the individual. Thus his problem was the ethical one in which he sought to discover the significance of nature and of society for human feeling. By nature as opposed to civilization, he meant spontaneity, simplicity, freedom, and goodness. By the state of nature, he understood that instinctive condition which he conceived of as existing in the early dawn of society when man lived in peaceful and unreflective bliss, free, as yet, from the wrongs of civilization. It is in his emphasis upon the state of nature and the living feeling that we may find the key to Rousseau's new order of life.

Rousseau developed his conception of life in three works: *La Nouvelle Héloise*, *Émile*, and the *Contrat social*. The first of these is his most important romance and exhibits something of his relation to the English sentimentalist Richardson, as well as the influence of certain works from French letters upon him. In it he described the conflict of love and duty in the person of the heroine, the dignity of marriage, the nobility of resignation, the fervor of religious faith, and the magnificence of nature. It is deeply stamped with his own emotional experiences, and in it his personality disclosed one of its most prophetic facets. It struck notes which were to effect a new age in poetical literature.

Émile and the *Contrat social,* Rousseau's constructive works, were his two chief contributions to the science of society. In *Émile* he wrote one of the most influential books ever written on the subject of education. In it he expounded a method of training the child that would warrant free and natural development under the guidance of a friendly tutor. In the fourth book, as elsewhere, he developed his views of natural religion. In the *Contrat social* he produced the most effective writing ever developed on the political rights and duties of man. It was on this work that the doctrines of the French Revolution were based. In it he unfolded his conception of an order of society which would free man from the reign of tyranny under which he was groaning. He sought to attain this liberty, which is "obedience to a law that we subscribe to ourselves," through a form of political government modeled upon the republican theory of his native Geneva, of which he was proud to be a citizen. In both of these works Rousseau accepted the feelings of his age and blended them with the current ideas to form the social, political, and educational ideals of democratic society; and with them he considered his mission accomplished.

Rousseau's influence upon the thinking of his own time, as well as times since, may be described under four main heads: religion, education, social and political views, and literature. It may seem strange to us today that the most immediate effect of his ideas in France was on the religious side; his profession of faith as expressed in Book IV of *Émile* and in the *Contrat social* stirred France far more than did his plan for the education of the natural man in things temporal. This aspect of his thought was widely discussed and brought many replies from the press. As he stated it, his creed was simple and may be summed up in the words: God exists, and the soul is immortal. In looking upon the vast expanse and the beauty of nature man is moved to a feeling of worship wherein God is worshiped in the heart as a God of peace and goodness. This was in part an expression of the deistic conception, and as such led to the cult of the Supreme Being of Robespierre on the one hand, and to the pantheistic faiths whether of the civil or social variety in a Theophilanthropy or a Pantisocracy, or even in the more recent fraternalism of the socialists. His influence may be noted, too, in the aesthetic Christianity of the nineteenth century,—in Chateaubriand and Renan.

In still another respect he has influenced religious thinking in the emphasis he placed upon the subjective, or experiential aspect of religion. For each individual religion furnishes not only an explanation of the universe but is also a very real inner fact. For him the central proof of the existence of God was that he felt His presence and a need for Him, and this was a far better proof than that given in dogmas and creeds. He put feeling in the place of reason. "Je sentis avant de penser; c'est le sort commun de l'humanité; je l'éprouvai plus qu'un autre." One should seek proofs of God in nature and in the human heart rather than in books or creeds.

Doubtless the widest sphere of his influence has been in education. His *Émile* is one of the "seminal books" in the history of literature. It was not the first work that presented innovations in training the young but it appeared at the moment when a reaction against the parental neglect of children had set in. It stimulated a sense of dignity in the task of rearing the young. It broke down the prejudices and the mechanical practices that were holding sway in the schools. It gave a new character to the whole process of education, with emphasis upon natural growth, self-reliance, and independent observation on the part of the student, and upon simplicity of method for the teacher. "A strong current of manliness, wholesomeness, simplicity, self-reliance, was sent by it through Europe, while its eloquence was the most powerful abjuration ever addressed to parental affection to cherish the young life in all love and considerate solicitude. It was the charter of youthful deliverance." It was the first expression of that democratic tendency in education which political and other circumstances gradually made general, alike in England, France, and Germany. In France that effect was not to pass, and one may note, today, the influence of *Émile* in the schools.

In England, although *Émile* was translated as soon as it appeared, it seems not to have produced an effect akin to that in France and Germany. It was later, in the middle of the nineteenth century, that the great change in English education took place. Then it came largely as a result of the growth of democracy and the circumstances that accompanied social and political change. In Germany his influence was more far-reaching. He gave impetus to an already extraordinary movement toward naturalness and freedom. The educational theories of Basedow, Lavater, Pestalozzi, Froebel, and Jean-Paul were inspired by Rousseau. As the result of his ideas they developed the kindergarten that has played so important a part in modern education. The work of Horace Mann in our own country shows the influence of Rousseau; and the whole structure of our democratic theory of education has been built on ideas that appear in his works.

In the field of social and political thought the *Contrat social* has had the most far-reaching influence. In it he treated the questions of the rights and responsibilities of the citizen, of sovereignty, and of the kind of state best fitted to govern the citizen. In France his greatest influence came in the political sphere in as much as he provided the principles for the Revolution. His *Contrat social* "was the match which kindled revolutionary fire in generous breasts throughout Europe. Not in France merely, but in Germany as well, its phrases became the language of all who aspired after freedom." This aspect of his thought attracted much attention in England; in fact, it was the strongest of his influences on the minds of English men. It is notably perceptible in the work of Paley, of Kames, of Adam Ferguson, and perhaps most of all in William Godwin. The political views of the founders of American liberty were greatly affected by him; and in Norway, his ideas were dominant in the formation of the Constitution of 1814. The catchwords of republican thought everywhere were taken from his writings.

In addition to these influences, Rousseau was the father of the Romantic movement, and there was hardly an author of that school who was not in some way indebted to him. In England, Wordsworth and Byron, Coleridge and Carlyle bear the marks of his ideas. In Germany he inspired an immense literary revival. Herder called him his master. Kant spoke of the change wrought in his thought by the conceptions of Rousseau. Goethe, Tieck, Schiller, Herbart, Schleiermacher—all felt his power in their views. Even the smaller men, Jacobi, Heinse, and Klinger shared it. In France Chateaubriand, Mme. de Staël, and their followers owed much to him. In Denmark, too, there were disciples of Rousseau; such as Sneedorff, Rothe, Rahbek, and Jens Baggesen. In Sweden a strong influence of Rousseau was felt through Geijer, and, in our own day, in Ellen Key and Strindberg. In Norway it was notable in Wergeland and more recently in Björnson. In Russia Tolstoi read and admired his works. It was in his emphasis upon the individual, the inner feeling, the mystical, the importance of the heart rather than the head, the development of the natural impulses, the beauty of nature, and the sovereignty of the inspiration of genius that Rousseau became the inspirer of the Romantic movement.

Professor Höffding, in *Jean Jacques Rousseau and His Philosophy*, has given us, in clear and definite outlines, one of the best general treatments of the life and thought of Rousseau, and one that should be of much interest to English readers. Rousseau has been a difficult figure to interpret, but, on account of his remarkable influence upon the minds of men and upon the institutions of education and government, a large literature has grown up around his romantic character and his philosophical ideas. Few among the many who have written upon him have been prepared so well by native endowment to give a sympathetic interpretation of him as Professor Höffding. Add to this his abundant knowledge of the history of philosophy and we have a singular equipment for understanding the conflict of ideas, the undercurrent of romantic trends of thought, and the relation of Rousseau to the surge of ideas in pre-Revolutionary France.

The work was first printed at Copenhagen in 1896. The author then kept himself abreast of the times in reading the many works that appeared in the early years of this century, and a second edition was published in 1912. The first edition was translated into German and the second into French, but until now it had not been made available in English. In preparing this translation we used the second Danish edition. We have made frequent comparison of our rendering of the text with the admirable French version of M. Jacques de Coussange, to whom we are indebted for many suggestions.

The importance of the subject and the permanent quality of the work make its appearance in English most desirable. For us, it has been a labor of much interest, and we have often been impressed by the sympathetic understanding, by the psychological insight into the mind of Rousseau, and by the clear and direct presentation of Professor Höffding. We trust that readers may find in it the stimulus for a fuller understanding of the mind and spirit of a remarkable man, and a deeper appreciation of the fruitfulness of his ideas.

We wish to express our gratitude to those friends who have kindly offered suggestions or made criticisms of the results of our work. We owe especial thanks to Professor Ernest Hunter Wright, of Columbia University, at whose suggestion we undertook the task of translating; to our friend and colleague, Dr. S. Marion Tucker, of New York City; to Professor Rasmus B. Andersen, of Madison, Wisconsin; to Mr. Carl Withers, a Former Fellow of the American Scandinavian Foundation; and to the reader and staff of the Yale University Press. For the frontispiece we are indebted to the original Danish edition.

L. E. S.

New York, June 25, 1930.

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Author's Preface to the American Edition

IN the middle of the so-called period of Enlightenment, when so many took pride in the thought of how far mankind—that is to say, the Europeans—had advanced in science and art, in literature, and in social organization, a lonely thinker raised the question whether all this civilization really did possess any value. Does not nature, in its purity and simplicity, surpass all that civilization has produced? Have we not come altogether too far from the simple life our ancestors led, perhaps also from that life the so-called natural man led? Have we not lost that genuineness, sympathy, and *naïveté* that in the good old days characterized men's ways? This was not the first time such a question had been raised. But Rousseau for the first time put this question of civilization with clarity and with passion.

Anyone who attempts to answer the question of the relation of nature to civilization must know both of these from his own experience. In his wandering youth Rousseau could go about in the open country, could learn how life unfolds unconsciously in obedience to immediate impulses without being narrowed by unnecessary reflection or by the artificial arrangements mankind has hit upon. If one asks why the unconscious unfolding of one's life is no longer possible, the answer can be discovered in the distribution of labor that obtains increasingly as civilization advances. Both in spiritual and in material fields the training of special talents and skills is demanded, one-sidedness becomes more and more necessary and replaces the open and complete development of life. This is shown more markedly in urban than in rural life; and in the large migration from the country to the city, Rousseau—the great Swiss author of his day—saw a big misfortune. In spiritual matters reason was cultivated more and more at the expense of emotion, which is after all the true heart of the spiritual life.

When Rousseau demanded a return to nature he did not mean that we should return to an animal existence. What he called nature is in evidence historically in diverse degrees and forms. The personal form in which he presented his ideas in his early writings was easily open to critical objections. What he demanded was a civilization truly originating in nature, that is, springing from that stage of existence mankind had at the time attained. Thus in his pedagogy he demanded that one should come to know the child's actual condition and capacity, and should not regard it as an adult on a smaller scale. He insisted on a definite distinction between the age of childhood and adult age. In like manner, he maintained that a political constitution suited to one nation could not be transferred as it was to another nation.

In Rousseau's autobiography, the *Confessions*, the urge for a natural unfolding of life is clearly evident. His happiest moments came when he was strolling in the solitude of the forest or was being rocked in his boat on the lake. He then forgot the world that so limited and so plagued him. His soul could devote itself freely to its thoughts and its dreams. Rousseau's best thoughts and happiest moods were closely related to his need and his faculty for such expansive experiences as these. Whatever inconsistency is found in him actually derives from the fact that his "expansions" were headed in different directions, so that one might lead to totally different thoughts from another. With his great frankness (that virtue he had the greatest right to boast of) he has not attempted to conceal the different directions in which his moods might lead him.

Anyone given to ready surrender to his emotional states and the thoughts they arouse, may easily turn egoist. This did not happen with Rousseau. His desire of surrendering himself to his moods was the very reason for his being able to enter into others' conditions, share their sorrows and joys. In the mutual feelings aroused through unconscious "expansions," in sympathy, especially, Rousseau found the basis for all morality. He distinguished sharply between the urge for self-preservation (*amour de soi*), which easily leads a person to feel at one with another, and love of self (*amour propre*), which, with calculating shrewdness, limits its interests to its own person.

Rousseau took it as a misfortune that men should inhibit these "expansions," which at one and the same time lead to an unfolding of their own being and make possible sympathy for other beings; and that they allow their fancies to juggle with possibilities over which they can exert no control, or to contrast their state with that of others—and so fall into discouragement and envy. Through his understanding of, and sympathy for, the conditions of others, he became the pioneer of modern democracy and socialism. He was no fantast, and he clearly perceived that the life of society demands certain forms and adjustments. And, as has already been indicated, in his later writings he altered the protest which he had registered against modern civilization. He now distinguished between that civilization which comes as a natural product of personal or social culture and that which is due neither to natural personal development nor to honest personal labor.

The great problem—which Rousseau raised with more sense than the critics have usually recognized, the problem which in its several forms took up his whole soul, as a pedagogical, a psychological, and a social writer—he did not solve. It raises itself anew, but in varying forms, for every new generation, and it must be treated according to the constantly changing conditions of modern times.

H. H.

Carlsberg, Copenhagen, July, 1930.

I

Rousseau's Awakening and His Problem

ON a warm summer day in 1749 Jean Jacques Rousseau was making a journey on foot from Paris to Vincennes in order to see Diderot, who was then in prison on account of the radical views which he had expressed in one of his writings. As he walked, reading (*le Mercure*), he came upon the subject of a prize proposed by the Academy of Dijon; it asked for a reply to the question whether the recovery of the sciences and the arts had contributed to purify or to corrupt morals. The question struck him like a flash of lightning and awakened a host of dormant thoughts. His heart beat rapidly and his tears ran. He later affirmed that he then discovered a new world and became a new man. Stretching himself out under a tree, he wrote while lying upon the ground a part of the discourse which he sent a little later to the Academy. But, very little of all that he had seen and felt while under the tree was he able to remember and write down. "All that I have been able to retain of the crowd of great truths has been very feebly saved in my three principal writings—which three works are inseparable, and form an entity."[1]

Here we have Rousseau in some of his essential traits: his enthusiasm, his tears, the rush of thoughts which did not always become a true treasure because he was not able to retain and develop the separate ideas,—but above all we have him here face to face with his problem. That which, under the tree, presented itself to him with a sudden clarity was the contrast between the state of society and civilization on the one hand, and the nature of man with his capacities and his needs on the other.

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[1] *Lettres à Malesherbes,* II.

The Academy of Dijon had, evidently without very well knowing it, touched a great problem which, precisely at the middle of the eighteenth century, was to present itself to those who saw deeper than the surface of things.

The art and the literature of the Renaissance, the foundation of the sciences of nature, the daring ideas and the genius of the new philosophy, had awakened some great hopes for the understanding of the world and for progress in life. The movement which was here awakened was no longer limited to narrow circles. A whole group of writers, in whose first rank were Bayle and Voltaire, had worked to spread into wider spheres the points of view and conclusions Rousseau had attained. The great Encyclopedia of Diderot and d'Alembert, which was then in preparation, was to crown the work of the Enlightenment and to give everyone access to the world of natural science, of philosophy, and of historical criticism. This whole movement was significant of a break with the ancient conceptions of life and with the ancient rules of conduct which neither had so vast a horizon, nor knew so many possibilities, but which in return had unfolded all the more securely in their narrow outline, relying upon instinct, tradition, and authority. Had this break led to true benefits for humanity? Could one continue to follow confidently the course on which he was embarked, or could those who blindly admired the new culture have overlooked the fact that with this break some essential values and possibilities had been lost?

Rousseau said later that from his early youth he had noticed, although confusedly rather than very clearly, the antithesis between human nature and the actual state of civilization; the Dijon theme had served merely to remove the scales from his eyes. He found that what was misunderstood and suppressed in modern civilization, and in the complex, restless, outward turned, self-conscious, and limited life that it had brought with it, was the Inwardness, the *Naïveté*, the Spontaneity,—that intuitive feeling which, by way of the great experiences of life open to all, one can come into contact with the Highest,—that genuine happiness that is to be found even in humble circumstances and narrow relationships; that is, that very unquestioning, spontaneous way of taking life. When he placed nature and civilization in contrast thus, he understood by nature spontaneity, simplicity, freedom, and goodness. His charge against civilization was that it made life circumspect, complex, strained, and bad.

In the discourse which brought him in 1750 the prize of the Academy of Dijon he maintained that our "souls themselves have been corrupted in proportion as our sciences and arts have advanced toward perfection. . . . Luxury, lewdness, and slavery have at all times been the chastisement of the vaunted efforts that we have made in order to get out of that fortunate ignorance in which the eternal wisdom has placed us." The older faith and patriotism disappear before the new morals which intellectual and aesthetic culture carry with them.

It is now the fashion to have radical views. Many who travel this path would have been fanatics in the day of the League. Now one prides himself on his tolerance. In our time, Socrates would certainly not have emptied the cup of poison, but he would have drained a cup more bitter: mockery a hundred times worse than death.

The discourse is weak in its reasoning and rhetorical in its form; but it made a great impression through the warmth and the enthusiasm with which it was written. At one stroke its author became celebrated. It was felt that a new force had come into literature; it seemed to be directed against the freethinkers (*esprits forts*), or, as they were soon called, the Encyclopedists. Rousseau belonged to their circle, he collaborated in the Encyclopedia, was a friend of Diderot and of d'Holbach. Diderot, inspired by his love for paradoxes, had actually encouraged Rousseau to reply to the Academy of Dijon in the way he did; it has even been maintained that it was he who had given Rousseau the idea for the reply. From the nature of the discourse it seemed, however, to be essentially an attack upon criticism and enlightenment. From that time Voltaire was ill-disposed toward Rousseau, who seemed to scorn everything that Voltaire fought for and to take the side of obscurantism.

At this period Voltaire was nursing the idea of calling all men who thought independently to the struggle against the tyranny of a church that in his letters he called, "*l'infâme*"; and from this moment Rousseau was in his eyes a renegade, a false brother.

There was, however, in the paradox of Rousseau a seed which in further development was to bring him into conflict with the champions of the old order of things no less than with the Encyclopedists themselves. Nor did the old order of the church and the state let "Nature" as Rousseau understood it come into its rights. In his appeal to Nature Rousseau meant to appeal to a force that stood above parties, whether liberal or conservative. In his later works, in his principal works, in fact, he developed his ideas from this point of view, and as he thus put himself outside of the old as well as the new, he became in his last years a lonesome and a hounded man.

As it sounded, Rousseau's protest applied to *all* civilization, literature, and art. In this form it was a rhetorical paradox which placed him in contradiction with himself, especially as he played the rôle of author. That he should weigh his words thus can be explained partly through the state of the particular civilization he confronted, and partly through his own personality and way of thinking.

The culture of this period had outlived itself. The great geniuses who had imprinted their character upon the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had no successors who were their equals. There were Epigoni, second-rate talents at work. In a letter written to Moultou,[1]

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[1] Translators' note: In *Correspondance Générale de J.-J. Rousseau*, edd. Th. Dufour and P.-P. Plan (Paris, 1924–28), I, 311, n. 1, Théophile Dufour has called attention to the fact that previous editors of Rousseau's correspondence had supposed that this letter had been

May 28, 1751, the year which followed the discourse at Dijon, Rousseau characterized the literature of the time, that his friend wished to discuss with him, thus:

> You wish to talk about literature, and I consent to it willingly. We shall endeavor to evaluate all the wonders of this century, so extolled for its enlightenment and so justly disparaged for its bad taste; so fertile in fine intellects (*beaux esprits*) and so destitute of genius: we shall throw some flowers upon the graves of those men so great and now so neglected, who have set the firm foundations of the temple of the Muses, and of the grand philosophical structure upon which one builds today so beautiful a house of cards.

Already, in his *Discours*, he had spoken with admiration of the men who had had no need of teachers because nature had destined them to make disciples, the Bacons, the Descartes, and the Newtons, "the preceptors of mankind." And later, in defending his ideas in the *Préface de Narcisse*, he said that the few geniuses who were able to lift the veil behind which truth conceals herself without suffering loss in doing it, are, indeed, the light and the glory of humanity, but that such exceptions exactly confirm his assertion. Wherever the work of civilization was done by direct contact Rousseau had nothing but admiration for it; but what he found lacking in the civilization of his epoch was originality,

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addressed to Moultou, but that this supposition was absurd since in the first sentence Rousseau indicated that he was writing to a contemporary of his "bon et vertueux père;" and further, he was not acquainted with Moultou until years later. Dufour has shown that the letter was addressed to Marcet de Mézières. (We owe this observation to the reader for the Yale University Press.)

vigor, and the freshness of nature. And what Rousseau felt, the young Goethe felt later. He decried, in his *Memoirs*,[1] the senile and effete impression that French literature was producing upon the younger generation.

But, in addition, it was Rousseau's charge that art and science stood outside of life. He said in the *Discours*, that the thinkers would not bring forth any great thing so long as authority and enlightenment were entirely dissociated. As long as it is thus, he said, the people will continue to be miserable, corrupt, and unhappy. Just as Rousseau was lamenting, then, the break from the original force, so here it was the break from the life of the people that he charged to the account of civilization. Upon both points he was in opposition to Voltaire and the Encyclopedists, who were well satisfied with what enlightenment they had attained, and content if only "la bonne compagnie" had a share in it, whatever happened to the other layers of society.

The paradoxical form of the critique of Rousseau was not alone due to the fact that he made the civilization of his time, which was indirect and without connection with life, represent all civilization, but it was also no less due to his temperament and to the special character of his endowments. His ideas were born in ecstasy. He thought in jerks, impulsively, and by leaps ("prime-sautier"). Ideas which he conceived in the moments of enthusiasm that came upon him, especially during his walks in the country—ideas showing new possibilities and vast, overwhelming perspectives—he found it difficult afterward to present in order and in sequence. Great as was the joy he experienced in meditation when it came upon him spontaneously, just so painful was his labor in forming a whole out of the many ideas bobbing up into his consciousness.[1] In his autobiographical works he dwells repeatedly on the contrast between the periods of inspiration and those of reflection, between the moments of excitation and those of meditation. What he grasped in his enthusiasm he could not always attain to in his endeavors at substantiation. He lived within himself that same antithesis between nature and civilization; and this peculiarity necessarily led him frequently to express his thoughts without coherence and without definition. None of his contemporaries ever discerned this peculiarity of his as clearly as did d'Alembert. In a letter wherein he sought, in vain, to calm the irritation of Voltaire against Rousseau, he said of him: "Jean-Jacques is a sick person with a great deal of intelligence, and one who has intelligence only when he has a fever. It is necessary neither to cure him nor to abuse him." The fever came from the fact that Rousseau's feeling was stronger than his thinking. Only such thoughts about which an emotion could concentrate, took root in his mind. He spoke, especially in the third book of the *Confessions*, "de sa lenteur de penser, jointe à sa vivacité de sentir" ("of his slowness of thought joined to his liveliness of feeling"). Thence came his need for solitude in order to think.

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[1] *Aus meinem Leben, Dichtung und Wahrheit.*

A thought becomes a paradox if you push it beyond the furthest bounds of its conception so that it contrasts with its own opposite extreme and receives stimulus from its very contradiction of other assumptions. One lets all the bonds and all the reservations fall, in order to set in relief the new element in the thought. A thought will take this paradoxical form in the ecstasy of inception and under the influence of the passion to establish finally what has been gained. Rousseau exclaimed as late as the *Émile*, "Rather paradoxes than prejudices!"

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[1] *Mon portrait, œuvres et correspondance inédites,* ed. Streckeisen-Moultou (Paris, 1861), p. 286.

In his writings in defense of the Dijon thesis,[1] especially that addressed to King Stanislas and to Charles Bonnet, and in his letters, he states those closer distinctions and limitations that in the heat of the first moment he had not always caught. It is the hasty, misplaced civilization, out of harmony with human need and capacity at a given time and place, which he rejects. And the ignorance which he praised is "the reasonable ignorance" which limits the desire for knowledge to accord with capacity. He affirms, above all, that he had always been determined to prevent the introduction of any civilization where it did not fit; for example, the civilization of a large nation in a small nation. He suggests the view that civilization and social life exhaust the natural forces of the human race; and that their perfection, which is a sign of senility and decrepitude, must not be forced. Not until he wrote his principal work, the *Émile*, did he succeed in expounding clearly the thought that all civilization which increases in due proportion to the capacities and the needs of man, and, in consequence, with independence and through individual activity, is healthy; and only then is it justified. In order to attain this thought in its full force Rousseau had to undertake a vaster justification of his first affirmation than he himself would acknowledge. But, with this closer justification and definition which he succeeded in finding, his protest against civilization contained the germ of a new civilization.

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[1] *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité.*

II

Rousseau and His Confessions

TO gain a picture of the life and character of this man who presented the great problem of civilization in so paradoxical but yet so fruitful a way, we must first of all study his autobiographical works. Hardly any human being has ever spoken about himself so completely and so frankly as has Rousseau. His *Confessions* are, in this as in other respects, unique in the rank of autobiographies. He once said that in frankness he would surpass Montaigne himself: the latter sketched himself only in profile—and what might there not be on the side not shown to us?[1] Rousseau would show us all sides of his being!

Had he not written his *Confessions*, the portrait of his character would appear more favorable and attractive than it does. He has, as has been pointedly remarked, laid the cards on the table. And he has not left much work for the psychological valets so abundant among the historians of modern literature. He did all the unveiling, even to the "partie honteuse." When his *Confessions* appeared, a few years after his death, it robbed Rousseau of many followers, and disturbed many of his admirers. In their enthusiasm over his writings these had made of him an ideal, a model. Oh! there was nothing that poor Jean Jacques, considering his character and the life he led, was less suited for. Our models must be harmonious and yet concentrated personalities that reveal to us the new qualities to be worked out in the race, in strong and natural development. Even though they have inner and outer struggles to undergo, they must advance with inner certainty toward their goal. But there are some natures which might be of great significance in the development of the race, though not exactly suited for models. Such are those who, perhaps, weakening under the stress of the contradictions in their nature, are drawn into experiences that throw light on human life, and recognize an urge lifting them beyond the given circumstances, an urge for which they can attain no satisfaction: they may even have to struggle with it to get it expressed in words. The inner disharmony of their life which seems to cause the greatest scandal among those whose paths have not led along the precipices, may be due to a wealth of elements that pressed forward, and to an expansion and a deepening of the thoughts and sentiments that made a unified and determined course of action impossible for them. If Rousseau had not thus confessed, we should have missed a genuine contribution to the knowledge of human nature.

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[1] One of the first drafts of the *Confessions*.

At first it was not his intention to make confessions;[1] but, on the other hand, when it was proposed that he describe his strange career, he consented, hoping to contribute to the knowledge of man's inner life. By painting an honest picture of a man in the light of his whole inner and outer life he wished to promote the knowledge of self; it was a "new service he wished to do for mankind." In an earlier sketch of the *Confessions* he says that he will write a book of real value to the philosophers, for he will supply "the basis of comparison for the study of the human heart" ("une pièce de comparaison pour l'étude du cœur humain"). In the first part of the *Confessions*, as we have it, this point of view still obtains.

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[1] Concerning the changing motives behind the composition of the *Confessions, vide:* Albert Jansen: *Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Paris, Geneva, Berlin, 1882), chap. vii: "Histoire critique de la rédaction des Confessions." The differences between the various extant manuscripts of the *Confessions* can be attributed particularly to the fact that Rousseau strove constantly to improve his style. *Vide* Th. Dufour, *Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1908,* p. 15.

But soon a new aim for the autobiography shot to the fore. There were things that weighed on his conscience from which he felt in his heart the need of being freed. In his nature dwelt high and noble purposes side by side with elements that were bound to drag him down into the mire. In single moments he found possibility of attaining in his instincts, as in his thoughts, the highest; but at the same time the great difficulty of holding to that high enthusiasm and of bringing his whole life into harmony with what he had felt in that moment of ecstasy. His character thus became problematic to others, and to himself as well. He has been accused of hypocrisy because of the inconsistency between his great ideas of life and the wretchedness of his own life. But, as often happens in an accusation of hypocrisy, there lay at the root of it a lack of psychological insight. Madame de Staël, herself, in a beautiful and pointed way, cleared him of this accusation: "He who is transported by his own ecstasy, and who feels for a moment what he perhaps will not have the strength to feel forever, is he the man to accuse of hypocrisy?"[1] Nothing was so generally characteristic of Rousseau as this contrast of momentary ecstasy and abject collapse. He could both raise himself high and sink low. Where then was the true Jean Jacques—on the heights or in the depths; in moments of enthusiasm and purity, or in moments of collapse and impurity? It could be no harder for him to answer this question himself than it was for others. The road he followed to unity and consistency of character was the road of repentance and confession. He says in a letter: "What distinguishes me from other men that I know is that in the midst of my faults I have always reproached myself for them."[2]

Yet it was not only from within that the urge to explain himself for posterity arose. Through his frankness toward his closest friends some of his personal affairs (especially the abandoning of his children) became known, and provided welcome material for his opponents. Voltaire, in particular, exercised no restraint in this matter. His anonymous *Sentiments des citoyens*, 1764, is one of the most repulsive libels known to literature. Rousseau was violently shocked by this mode of attack. He perceived that if he were not to be accused of something worse than he was really guilty of, he must give a thorough account of his actions.

But the aims of his autobiography underwent still another shift. In his later years, after the break with

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[1] *Lettres sur les ouvrages et le caractère de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, 1788, p. 99.

[2] *Lettre à Mme d'Houdetot*, 25 mars 1758.

Voltaire and the Encyclopedists, and after the persecution on the part of the French and the Swiss governments, morbid suspicion gained supremacy over his mind. He believed himself the victim of a conspiracy aimed at breaking down his reputation and making him a dependent, and dishonoring him in men's eyes. Under the influence of this suspicion that amounted almost to mania, the autobiography became a defense, a reply to the attacks he imagined coming from all sides. The last books of the *Confessions* were written in this frame of mind; and besides, in several notes to the earlier sections he has put down the new explanation he thought he had discovered of people's behavior toward him.

All in all, the *Confessions* are meant as psychological document, as confession, and as defense; and these three points of view must be respected by the reader. That the book must be used with discretion wherever he discusses his true or assumed enemies, goes without saying. He describes Grimm, Madame d'Épinay, Diderot, d'Holbach, and Voltaire as Dante describes those he assigns to Hell. A judgment of this sort is held in every autobiography.

On the other hand, one might think him quite trustworthy whenever he spoke ill of himself. Yet, there is this danger with all confession, that the mere attempt to form in definite thoughts and words what has gone on in the mind and caused the actions, easily focuses that which actually was dark and half conscious as clear and definite volition, and lets that which was wrung from the bitter distress of the moment stand out as the fruit of a clear maxim. The inner happenings receive thus in this direct formulation, a grossness and clumsiness that were not in them, and the black splotches in the painting attract an attention quite out of proportion. Thence can arise easily a certain subtle zest in talking about one's own dark sides. One enjoys them as one's own, meets one's self in them, and feels them as something peculiar and distinguishing. What is more, one enjoys his own honesty in confessing them. This sentimental confession of sins, and Pharisaism, Rousseau by no means escaped. He says, too, "that thru a *tour d'esprit* inexplicable to himself" ("que par un tour d'esprit qu' il a peine à s'expliquer"), he was rather too strict than lenient with himself.[1] The explanation lies no doubt in the desire to mirror himself, that brings with it desire for all that the mirror reflects, providing it is his own, and, too, that it easily makes mirroring one's self a virtue. It is characteristic of Rousseau that he twice treated infatuation with one's self, in poetic form. In a comedy he wrote in his early youth, *Narcisse*, he had a young man who was painted unwittingly in female clothes, fall in love with his own portrait. And in *Pygmalion*, he let the artist fall in love with the work of his own hands. In his *Confessions*, Rousseau revealed as much through his faults as through his elevated feelings. This factor must be taken into consideration on reading this book, which is as full of contradictions as the life and character it delineates.

Even where Rousseau devoted himself to his recollections without preoccupation, one must maintain a critical attitude. There is no other reason than that the backward-looking description of our own life is involuntarily colored by later experiences and moods. When, in the meantime, the whole basis for our personality has changed, it is difficult to look without bias on what lies further back,—yes, even to recall it at all. Rousseau depended upon letters and notes from the earlier days to only a very slight extent in writing the *Confessions*. He wrote, for the most part, from memory. He acknowledged that he might have committed errors both concerning the facts and the order of their presentation, but he thought that, on the whole, he remembered aright.

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[1] *Les Rêveries d'un promeneur solitaire*, IV.

> I have [he said], only one faithful guide on whom I can count, namely, the chain of feelings that has indicated the continuity of my being, and through them that of the events which were the cause or the effect of them. . . . I may make some omissions of facts, some transpositions, some errors in dates; but I cannot be mistaken about what I felt nor about what my feelings made me do: and this principally is what counts.[1]

Here we have a most characteristic declaration of Rousseau. We see that his memory, like his thinking, lies under the influence of his feeling. It is surely an illusion when he thinks he can recall moods of his earlier life directly, and then through the moods recall the events whose effects or causes they were. Observation would indicate that it is far easier to recall the experiences of the past than the moods of the past. In any case the mood one is in, will play a vital rôle: the more closely it resembles the mood that was experienced, the more it will favor the recollection of this; but, the more it differs from this earlier mood the harder will it be to make the recollected picture complete and exact. A kind of selection of memories from the past is undertaken through the mood we are in at the time of recollecting, but the correspondence of this selection to the original moods it is extraordinarily difficult for us to ascertain with sure insight. Rousseau stated often, that in his memories he shows a tendency to dwell on the bright and sunny, and to forget sorrow, a tendency he derives from the natural impulse to prefer the bright to the somber. While his fancy, egged on by fear and suspicion, painted the future possibilities in the most terrible blackness, the imaginative selection directed toward the past was happy and fair—excepting for the dark spots which his own faults set in relief. Thus, he explained why he does not hate his enemies (even though he fears and suspects them): he does not preserve memories of the evil they have done him. This is attested to by men close to him in the latter years of his life (like Corancez).[1] These bear witness to his never speaking ill of anyone, even one whom he counted among his enemies. In this peculiarity of Rousseau's memory is explained, to a great extent, that stamp of splendor and well-attuned genuineness that he succeeds in lending to the earlier happy periods of his life. For instance, he dates back quite certainly through an illusion of the memory the enthusiasm for nature and the need for solitude that in his later years played such an important rôle with him. He himself furnishes us the means of

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[1] Book VII of the *Confessions*.

[1] *Vide* his *De J. J. Rousseau* (Paris, 1798), p. 27.

verification. In his *Rêveries d'un promeneur solitaire* he repeatedly makes the statement that it was not until after his break with mankind that he felt real joy in experiencing and in contemplating nature.

> These dreamlike ecstasies that came to me now and then in my solitary walks, were joys I owed to my persecutors; without whom, then, I should never have found nor known the treasures I bore within me.[1] . . . I remember quite well how during my brief days of prosperity, these same lonely walks, that today bring me such keen joy, were insipid and boresome.[2] . . . Taking refuge with our common mother, I sought to escape in her arms the attacks of her children.[3]

Now, in the *Confessions* this joy in nature accompanies him from his very childhood on, and is described as possessing a strength that it never could have gained excepting through the contrast provided by his clash with human beings.

Besides, it can be clearly proved that Rousseau attributed to the happy period of his residence with Madame de Warens at Les Charmettes a much longer duration than it actually ever can have had. With the help of reliable documents we can now fix the chronology and show that Rousseau actually made the idyl of Les Charmettes begin two years too early, even that the idyl was almost over when the sojourn at Les Charmettes began.[4] The chain of events is a surer basis for judgment than the chain of emotions. Out of his wealth of genuine feelings on thinking of the vanished idyl, Rousseau has formed this illusion of the idyl's having lasted longer than it actually did.

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[1] II.

[2] VIII.

[3] VII.

[4] *Vide* Eugène Ritter: *La famille et la jeunesse de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Paris, 1896), pp. 232–234.

Finally, of course, in the composition of the *Confessions* the very desire to give an artistic presentation dominated. He let his fancy fill in the voids of his memory, he acknowledges, and unconsciously beautified his lost happiness.[1] Moreover, one can see clearly in the *Confessions* how from the very start he focuses on such traits as, in his opinion, explain his character as it was to become later, and likewise how he takes care to assemble the various traits and events so that contrast and variety in the presentation are assured.

Rousseau's *Confessions* is a wonderful book. As he told us, he wrote it with his heart, whereas his other books he wrote in part with the mind alone. For the very reason that the book is at one and the same time a description, a confession, and a defense, is it so extraordinarily rich. It expresses the melancholy joy of memory, as also the fear and suspense that arise from the Present. It provides an outlet for the consciousness of the dark spots as well as for that of the highest and purest aspirations. Genuine feeling and riotous romanticism abound midst clear pictures of the times and fresh scenes of nature. So far as the language of the book goes, I shall not venture beyond saying that, according to Sainte-Beuve,[2] it constitutes a revolution in the history of the French language the most important after Pascal.

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[1] *Rêveries,* IV.

[2] *Causeries du Lundi,* III.

Besides the *Confessions*, Rousseau wrote other autobiographical works that, like the former, saw the light of day after his death.

In three dialogues under the common title *Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques*, he has given a masterful characterization of himself based on a general psychological theory which he applied elsewhere in his works. Here also he formulates most rationally the fixed idea of persecution by his earlier friends that in the later years drove him from place to place. In this way the book can be taken as a psychological document of no little interest toward the understanding of the morbid soul.

In his *Rêveries d'un promeneur solitaire*, though the fixed idea has not been abandoned, a milder, more resigned frame of mind obtains. He has "regained the peace of the soul, yes, almost its happiness." Having written down his confessions he feels as one standing outside of life. Memories, dreams, and reflections unfold freely, and some of the most beautiful things Rousseau has written are found in this work. Over it there lies, as it were, a glow of the evening sun, a glow of peculiar splendor as one comes from the *Confessions*.

III

Life, Character, and Works

1. CHILDHOOD

TO preserve its Protestant faith the family from which Rousseau sprang migrated at the middle of the sixteenth century from Paris to Geneva. It was a prosperous line, the majority of whose male members worked at watchmaking. They took part as liberals in the inner struggles of the little republic. At birth, Jean Jacques belonged to *Les Citoyens*, the first class of the population. There were five classes in all, so that when Jean Jacques later called himself a *Citoyen de Genève* he was flourishing an aristocratic title.

Geneva still felt, then, the influence of memories of the days when it was the citadel and capital of Protestantism. A virile and independent spirit reigned among its citizens, but still a rigorous discipline was observed. Calvin had made the constitution more aristocratic and had also introduced a Consistory that guarded carefully the severity of morals, even among the *Citoyens*, the citizens of the first class. For only in practicing severity with themselves could they maintain their supremacy. Luxury, gaiety, song, dance, gambling, the theater—these were things forbidden or frowned upon. For people whose blood was restless this strict discipline must have been a curse. Certain symptoms would indicate that Rousseau's nearer relatives had had trouble in conforming to it.

Rousseau's mother, who died very shortly after his birth, is described as a beautiful, lively, and independent woman. His father, who was a watchmaker, like most of his forefathers, was also of a happy disposition, and had an independent spirit that now turned into pugnacity and now into wanderlust. A few years after his marriage he left his wife and children and went to Constantinople, where he worked at his profession. The year after his return, his second son, Jean Jacques, was born, June 28, 1712. As the mother died a week later, his education fell upon the father, who had one of his sisters come and live with them. The education Jean Jacques received was calculated to develop his feelings and fancy. His father began early to read novels and historical works (particularly Plutarch's *Lives*) with him. Father and son were so wrapped up in this fanciful or remote world that they would read all the night through, until they heard the swallows twittering in the morning. The father would then say shamefully, "I am a bigger child than you."

When Jean Jacques was ten years old, his father had to flee from Geneva on account of a duel, and the boy was then taken in by a relative, a country parson. Rousseau says that his joy in nature was already being awakened in him. Among other traits peculiar to him as a child, he emphasizes hatred of injustice, which awoke when he was once punished unjustly, and very early indications of sensuality (tempérament très-lascif): "My blood boiled from sensuality almost from my birth," he says. To receive punishment from his governess afforded him sensual delight. His sensual lust otherwise got expressed in his imagination, for which the reading of novels provided incentive and material. He reveled in the worship of ideal beings and lived more in the imagined world than in the actual. And thus was favored his taste for solitude.

After being dismissed as a scrivener's assistant in a public office, he was apprenticed to an engraver. The work interested him, but he was given severe and brutal treatment. The restraint and prohibitions incited his desire for freedom and aroused his cravings. His consolation was the tramps he took on Sundays in the outskirts of the city together with his comrades. In their wanderings the young men often forgot the time and not seldom found the gates of the city locked when they turned homeward. Many a time was Jean Jacques punished severely for this reason. And, hence, one Sunday evening in the spring of 1728, finding the gate closed, he resolved, in his despair, not to expose himself to what awaited him but to flee out into the wide world. And no sooner was this resolution taken than despair gave place to a feeling of freedom and of joy over the adventurous life ahead. Now perhaps, he would find out there what hitherto he had but dreamt of! The world of heroic and erotic pictures that had filled his imagination would now open before him in reality.

At this sudden prompting he thus broke off the even career that lay before him which possibly would have led him into work as a citizen of Geneva such as his ancestors had undertaken. But no continuous career lay before him. In his life as in his endowments and his character it is the sudden whims that determine matters.

Education had favored that side of his nature, reinforced by inherited tendencies. It is characteristic that his older brother, François, several years before had run away from his apprenticeship like Jean Jacques. But while François disappeared without traces, the vagabond life Jean Jacques was setting out on was to leave deep traces in the development of the human spirit. He found "a new world," though it was not the world he had dreamt of.

The sudden rupture as soon as a new and tempting possibility occurred is a trait often to reappear in Rousseau's life. His romantic yearning for freedom and pleasure kept demanding fresh air, freedom from restraint, a new horizon. If he became the prophet of nature, it meant that nature was for him, first and last, freedom.

2. ROUSSEAU AND MADAME DE WARENS

His flight took Jean Jacques across the Savoyan frontier and to a Catholic priest, among others, who received him hospitably. Here came a new whim that was at once followed. The priest asked him if he were not inclined to go over to Catholicism. The young vagabond agreed to this in the good humor into which the priest's hospitality had put him, and—incidentally, perhaps,—out of eagerness to try something new. He was then referred to an elegant lady in Annecy, Madame de Warens, who took under her protection young men turning to Catholicism. This acquaintance became, for good or for ill, decisive in Rousseau's whole future.

This remarkable woman was born at Vevay, on the other side of Lake Geneva. In her youth she had come under the influence of Pietism which had then spread from Germany into French Switzerland. She had learned to consider the genuineness of the emotion as the fundamental fact in religion, whereas the sectarian distinctions had become for her external and superfluous. A restless and complex nature was hers; yet there seem no grounds for doubting that she was, in her way, of a religious nature, though there were many other elements in her makeup than those which inclined her to religious earnestness.[1] With the skepticism with which she approached dogmas and creeds as a natural consequence of her mystical Pietism, was connected a skepticism derived from an entirely different source. She was a great admirer of Bayle. Even on her flight to Savoy she had his *Dictionnaire*, and Rousseau says of her that "she never talked of any one but Bayle." Besides these various tendencies, she enjoyed from her youth an adventurer's zest for alchemy and for industrial speculations, that often drew her upon venturesome undertakings and finally ruined her. She had been married early, but as she was dissatisfied with her marriage and had got involved in hapless speculations, she fled across the lake from Vevay to Savoy; here she went over to Catholicism and received a pension from the King of Sardinia. Rousseau says of her that, whatever the motive for her religious conversion, she was most sincerely devoted to the religion she had chosen. But he concedes that she adopted a most liberal attitude to the teachings of the Church. Not one dogma did she accept as the Church did. The fact has been pointed out that she believed in purgatory but not in hell.

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[1] M. Mugnier (*Mme. de Warens et J-J Rousseau.* Paris, 1891, pp. 24 ff.) doubts the genuineness of her religious sentiments and believes that her earlier teacher, Magny, the pioneer of Pietism in French Switzerland, was deceived by her when he found her even later "bien tournée du côte de Dieu." Eugène Ritter, however (*Famille et jeunesse de Rousseau,* pp. 256 ff.), maintains that in spite of everything one cannot deny her earnestness and sincerity.

She lived first in Annecy, later in Chambéry. In her house were to be met not only proselytes and neophytes but all sorts of adventurers and knights of industry enjoying liberally her hospitality, counsel, and help. Quite often there was brought to play on these young men not only religious zeal and industrial passion but also a totally different element. As in matters of creed, so also in erotic concerns, she had for what she considered outer forms, little regard. She granted her favors out of pity to bind the young men to her and to save them from a dissolute life. This side of her nature we know only from Rousseau's *Confessions*. He has considered himself justified in being as frank about his benefactress as about himself. He states that her aberrations were not due to her heart, that was pure and noble, but to her false conceptions of the meaning of the sexual relation. Not everything in her nature and fate is perfectly clear to us.[1]

Two puzzling natures met here. The many different, both good and questionable, seeds in Jean Jacques's nature came separately to bloom under this remarkable woman's influence. The weeds waxed apace with the good seed, and the weeding that was so much needed did not take place. It was as though from his earliest childhood and all through his youth he should be introduced into relationships that gave the conflicting elements of his being free play.

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[1] *Vide* Albert de Montet, *Mme. de Warens et le pays de Vaud* (Lausanne, 1891); "Documents inédits sur Mme. de Warens" (*Revue historique Vaudoise, 1898–1899*).

It was on Palm Sunday, 1728, that he saw Madame de Warens for the first time. Fifty years later, shortly before his death, he recalled this day in eloquent words, perhaps the last he wrote: "This moment," said he, "was decisive for my whole life and effected through an inevitable chain of circumstances the destiny of my days."[1]

He was at once infatuated by the brilliant, elegant woman that received him so agreeably. It was as though he saw both a mother and a mistress, one who could direct his spiritual life and make comfortable his material existence. She kept him but a few days this time and sent him on to Turin, there to be converted according to the rules of the game.

He went afoot, and this walking tour over the Alps is epoch-making in the history of the feeling for nature. Though Rousseau perhaps inserts later experiences into the description of the moods of his youth, we can yet believe him when he tells of the enthusiasm of this trip. His mood was quite other than that in which Ludwig Holberg a few years before (1716) had traveled in the opposite direction. "From Turin," says Holberg, "I traveled over the Alps and came to Savoy, a land which, though mountainous and ugly to behold, still encloses many beautiful spots and towns." Rousseau's mood owed much to the meeting with his protectress, under whose wings he still felt himself; it gave him a sense of security, and stuff for his dreams. Without strong soul-stirrings within, man cannot find a soul in nature, and for Rousseau mountain, wood, meadow, and brook now took on life and soul. From that time on, he says, "I had a keen appreciation of mountains[1] and of walking tours." Perhaps it was at that time the free wandering out into the world toward a distant goal that appealed to him. Throughout his whole youth, walking tours played an important rôle for him. He found "joy in going" independent of the "desire to reach the goal." The brisk pace and the shifting scenes started his thoughts moving and emboldened them to rise above all limitations. If "the eternal yearning that never finds peace is the deepest secret of the walking tour," then Rousseau discovered that secret. He is the founder of the psychology of the walking tour. There was in random wandering something that corresponded to the trait in his nature which he designated as *la manie ambulante*,[2] and which prevented his finding happiness except in constant rambling.[3] Rousseau realized in his life the free and hardy vagabond type that, with great expectations and wishes, wanders out into the world to discover the Highest; that type which the romanticists later wrote more poetry about than imitated. Reality here, as often happens, preceded poetry. He above all had to go out into nature herself, he who was to register the radical condemnation of the civilization of all times.

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[1] *Rêveries,* X.

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[1] Rousseau discovered the beauty of mountain scenery and awakened an appreciation of it in his writings, but it was the lower wooded mountain regions he loved. The beauty of the high Alps was first discovered by Saussure. *Vide* Ludwig Friedländer, "Die Entwickelung des Gefühls für das Romantische in der Natur," in his work, *Sittengeschichte Roms,* 5. Aufl. II, p. 217.

[2] *Confessions,* II.

[3] "La félicité ambulante," *ibid.,* III.

In Turin Rousseau was first taught in a monastery, then ceremoniously received into the bosom of the ancient Church and thereupon sent out into the world with a few pennies in his pocket. He tried to manage in various ways, first as a drummer, then as lackey. This was a period of spiritual drought for him. The dependent positions did not cultivate his more fortunate qualities,—and one of the things that he came later to regret most, a false accusation directed against a female fellow servant to escape confessing a little theft, belongs to this period. He would often visualize the young girl and worry over her possible fate. In *Émile* he refers to his condition at this time and describes it as much more mean and morbid than in the *Confessions*. Then he met a minister, Abbey Gaime, who awakened his better nature and who became later one of the prototypes of the Savoyard Vicar; in *Émile* he makes him the mouthpiece of his religious ideas. From lackey he rose to a kind of secretary as soon as his gifts and knowledge were noticed in the noble house in which he served. It seems that the plan was to train him for a very responsible post; he was well treated and carefully taught. But the vagabond spirit awoke in him on his meeting a former comrade from Geneva who now wanted to tramp back over the mountains. The yearning for freedom, for the mountains,—and for Madame de Warens,—awoke. The impulse had hardly stirred in him before it was acted on, and again a career was broken off that appeared to have opened before him.

Many years later Rousseau wrote, after some reflections on his character: "I have never really been fit for the society of men where everything is concern, obligation, duty; and my natural independence always renders me incapable of the surrender necessary to whosoever wishes to live with men."[1] No statement in his biography is better supported than this one.

When he returned to Madame de Warens he found a home with her such as he had not known since his earliest childhood. A cordial relation grew up between them as between mother and son; he called her "Maman" and she called him "Petit." He lent her a hand with her daily tasks; she tried to find a position for him. Her older friends whom she consulted found him so stupid that in their opinion he was fit only for a country parson. Rousseau explains this appearance of stupidity in the slowness and lack of coherence of his conversation that contrasted so strangely with his fiery feelings. If, in a conversation, ideas were to be sought from without for an immediate reply, he could seldom find either thought or expression. Only when he was free from outer constraint, in solitude, or when the feelings incited him to thought, only then he had "esprit." For this reason he was easily driven into a corner. He came to suffer much from this later in the salons of Paris.

Things did not go well for him at the theological seminary to which he was sent. Hence he turned to music, which from then on played a considerable rôle in his life. Once when Madame de Warens was in Paris for a while, he wandered about in French Switzerland performing as a musician, sometimes, however, making a great fiasco of it. For a time the gipsy nature mastered him. In his wanderings he visited, among other places, Vevay, "Maman's" birthplace, and Clarens near by. The beauty of the region and the memories these places awakened in him inspired him so that he never forgot them. Many years later he laid the scene of his famous novel *La Nouvelle Héloïse* in this region. A description of his mood shows how the emotion could, through mirroring himself, turn into sentimentality:

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[1] *Rêveries,* IV.

> On this trip to Vevay I surrendered myself as I went along the beautiful shore to the sweetest melancholy; my heart leaped up with passion before numberless innocent joys; a sweet tenderness came over me, I sighed and wept like a child. How many times did I stop to weep in peace; seated upon a large rock I amused myself watching my tears fall into the water![1]

Later, when he received the inspiration on the way to Vincennes he did not notice until afterward—on looking at his clothes—that he had been weeping. Jean Jacques's tear glands were easily stimulated and he knew both the immediate emotion that only afterward becomes self-conscious, and the strange double condition in which one enjoys the mood itself at the very moment of its occurrence.

An Armenian adventurer he ran into got him to go wandering with him through Switzerland. On this tour he established connections with the French legation that took charge of him and sent him on to Paris—to become an officer. A new horizon! But since, despite his recom-

[1] *Confessions,* IV.

mendations, he was treated in Paris more like an attendant than a cadet, and since he yearned for "Maman," who was not to be found there, he wandered back to Savoy. This trip on foot he describes with much enthusiasm.

"Maman," who had now settled in Chambéry, was glad to see him, and he was given a position in a surveyor's office, where for a while he worked industriously. But only for a while. The dull work in the dark and narrow rooms he could not endure very long; so he found refuge again in music, and became a much-sought-after teacher of music for young ladies in Chambéry. That was the life of a lord for Jean Jacques, to teach beautiful young ladies—for he maintained that they were all beautiful. His easily awakened amorousness, that both in Turin and during the earlier sojourn in Savoy had stirred at the least occasion, reminds one of the page in the *Mariage de Figaro.* He was a Cherubino type, and his youthful, agile form, with his languishing eyes, harmonized with it. When even elderly ladies seemed to find pleasure in the page, "Maman" began to have her doubts, and, lest he should fall into bad hands, made him her lover.

This is perhaps the most painful passage to the reader in the *Confessions.* One can readily understand that he should say, "I felt as if I had committed incest." He experienced on entering a relationship of love with his motherly friend a clash of two emotions, each of which belongs by itself among the deepest and holiest, but is violated when both are concentrated upon the same object. Still, the reader feels this stronger than

Rousseau did, for whom this whole period now opening lay in a poetic glow that lent warmth and splendor to his narrative. This, too, was one of the particular relationships to which Rousseau was to be introduced on his roundabout flight from civilization to nature. He learned that one can go beyond the bounds "civilization" has set, without, however, arriving at "true nature herself."—And add to this that Rousseau knew her favors to be shared by another,—another "unfortunate" for whom she had felt pity. His name was Claude Anet, like Rousseau, a convert who had fled from Switzerland. It took, indeed, debasement to find happiness in such relationships. Poor Rousseau! In the days of his happiness we could not sympathize with him because of the degrading conditions, and in the days of unhappiness that overtook him later mad suspicion so gained the mastery of him that he repels his reader as he repelled his friends. What reconciles us again and again with him is his intense and deep aspiration for what is pure and great, the "Excelsior!" that rang in his soul, and which, despite all his baseness, he set ringing for the generation to follow.

Rousseau's older rival seems to have been a practical man who managed somehow to maintain order in "Maman's" business affairs. After his death they kept getting more and more disorganized on account of her wild speculations and projects. Rousseau was not the man to put or keep things in order; still he had the sensible idea of getting her to shift from industry to agriculture. She rented a country place outside of Chambéry which bore the name of "Les Charmettes," with garden, vineyard, and fields. During the summer sojourns here Rousseau could bask in nature and in his conversations with "Maman." Soon he plunged into extensive studies.

(The lease has been found and it shows that the removal to "Les Charmettes" could not have taken place before 1738, though the *Confessions* sets it two years earlier. The idyl, as we said before, had stretched in his memory.)

The years in Chambéry and "Les Charmettes" were his years of study. His physician, Dr. Salomon, was a zealous Cartesian and initiated him into the study of philosophy and other sciences. He gained his first interest for philosophy, and for study in general, through the reading of Voltaire's *Lettres sur les Anglais*, published in London in 1732, in Paris in 1734. Through him he got acquainted with the new English scientific thought represented by Locke and Newton, and its fight with the Cartesian philosophy. Rousseau came strongly under the influence of both; he can be called a disciple of both Locke and Descartes. But, with all his study of Locke besides Malebranche and Fénelon, the Cartesian thinkers exercised the greatest influence on both the content and direction of his ideas, as we shall see later in our consecutive presentation of his philosophical views. He tried to exercise his mind by following patiently the various thinkers' presentations, even when he could not get them to harmonize. Through these studies, in which the energy and freshness of the self-taught made up for the lack of schooling, he was led into the great dialectic of philosophy and began to seek the platform from which he could proclaim his own reply. His encyclopedical interests led him to take up seriously, in addition to philosophy, the study of mathematics, Latin, and history. In a poem written then, *Le Verger des Charmettes*, he mentions these different studies:

> Tantôt avec Leibniz, Malebranche et Newton,
> Je monte ma raison sur un sublime ton,
> J'examine les lois des corps et des pensées;
> Avec Locke je fais l'histoire des idées;
> Avec Kepler, Wallis, Barrow, Raynaud, Pascal,
> Je devance Archimède, et je suis l'Hopital.
> Tantôt, à la physique appliquant mes problèmes,
> Je me laisse entraîner à l'esprit des systèmes:
> Je tâtonne Descartes et ses égarements,
> Sublimes, il est vrai, mais frivoles romans.
> J'abandonne bientôt l'hypothèse infidèle,
> Content d'étudier l'histoire naturelle.[1]

The aim of all these studies was not only personal culture,[2] but an appointment as tutor or secretary in a family of rank. In a letter to his father written about this time he discusses these plans, but yet acknowledges that his highest wish is to stay with Madame de Warens. His motherly friend took a most significant part in his development through a religious crisis that opened the way for Jansenist ideas and brought him fear of eternal damnation. "Maman," with her free religious views and her conviction that though there was a purgatory there was no hell, was "of more help" to him in this crisis, according to what he says, "than all the theologians of the world could have been."

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[1] Now with Leibnitz, Malebranche, and Newton,
I raise my reason to a high pitch,
I examine the laws of bodies and of thoughts;
With Locke I construct the history of ideas;
With Kepler, Wallis, Barrow, Raynaud, Pascal,
I pass beyond Archimedes, and I follow l'Hopital.
Again, applying my problems in physics,
I let myself be carried away by the sense of the systems:
I grope with Descartes and his aberrations,
Sublime, it is true, but frivolous romances.
Soon I abandon the infidel hypothesis,
Satisfied to study natural history.

[2] Notes and compositions of this period have been published by Th. Dufour, in *Annales de la Société, J. J. Rousseau*, 1905, pp. 200ff.

A disorder Rousseau suffered from sent him to Montpellier to consult a famous physician. An amorous adventure on the way revealed how easily he could forget "Maman" for less motherly beauties—or rather how easily he forgot everything when once he was out on the highway; and yet on getting home it was a sorrow to find that he had now another rival for her favors in a new convert. He could no longer endure sharing her heart with another. He accepted a tutor's position in Lyon. A sketch for a scheme of education, which was an outline for *Émile*, survives from this period. Incidentally he made the discovery that he was not cut out for an educator. When, in addition, the longing for "Maman" awoke, he went back—the fifth time that he took refuge in her. But not finding conditions changed, and her affairs being worse than ever, he determined to betake himself to Paris to make his fortune and to find means of helping her. He had conceived the notion of a new system of notation (something similar to the later Chevé method), that he was building his hopes on. "I left my heart in 'Les Charmettes'" (he says at the beginning of the seventh book of the *Confessions*), "and built my last castle in Spain there, hoping some day to deposit at the feet of 'Maman,' when she had found herself again, the treasures that I had acquired."

3. THE RESIDENCE IN PARIS

The new system of notation was presented to l'Académie des Sciences, but received no approbation. Thus Rousseau's residence in Paris, lasting, with a few interruptions, from the autumn of 1741 to the spring of 1756, began with a disappointment. But during the negotiations over the system of notation he met several men of science and men of letters; and music provided him in this first period with a living as well as made his name known. Through the influence of patrons of rank he was appointed a few years later as secretary to the ambassador in Venice. In the famous republic he enjoyed opportunities for historical studies and undertook a comparison of the Venetian constitution with that of his own country. He conceived the plan of a work on constitutions. He also grew familiar with Italian music, which he came to champion against the French. But whatever hope he had of a settled career in diplomacy vanished when he resigned because he could not endure the ambassador's unreasonableness and arrogance.

Shortly after his return to Paris, while he was working on an opera, he established an acquaintance that was of fatal significance. In his boarding house was a young girl by the name of Thérèse Levasseur, who had charge of the linen. She ate at the common table, where she was often the victim of teasing. Rousseau, who felt attracted by her modesty, and particularly by her wide-awake and mild look, took her part, and soon a closer relationship was formed. As he acknowledges, he never really loved her; but he needed a person to whom he could attach himself, one who felt the same simplicity and receptivity of heart that he had felt toward "Maman." The more he felt restrained and unnatural toward strangers, the more he craved an intimacy (*société des cœurs*) in which he need fear no criticism whenever he let his emotions run off with his words. This he could do only by living with one who demanded no intellectuality of him, and who could not reproach him for his self-contradictions. In this he need have no fear so far as Thérèse went. She fulfilled all the requirements that could be demanded of simplicity. "La simplicité d'esprit de cette excellente fille égalait sa bonté de cœur."[1] He tried in vain to develop her mind. She never really learned to write, though Rousseau thought she wrote quite passably. Her letters are atrocious in style and spelling, which fact shows that his judgment was generous. A great undertaking it was merely to teach her to tell the time. And she never could quite catch the succession of the months or fathom the elements of figuring. Yet he praises her good character and practical sense. She took care of him and was his refuge in good days and bad. When they had been living together a score of years, in the presence of two friends, he ceremoniously declared her his wife.

If the relation with Thérèse can be called a misfortune for Rousseau, there are several reasons for it. She could not possibly be interested in what interested him.

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[1] *Confessions,* VII.

During the first idyllic period of their life in Paris, this made but little difference; but out in the seclusion of the country she fell to the level of housekeeper. His long walks bored her. They had too few ideas in common and a subject for deepest emotion and meditation for him meant nothing to her. The simplicity of her mind was too great for this relationship to occupy him entirely, and with his longing heart he sought an object that could provide what he missed. Now, Thérèse in her goodness of heart allowed herself to be led by her mother and her family, who tried to exploit the liaison with Rousseau in every way possible. It weighed on him materially and spiritually. Finally, when they had children, for whom he did not think he could provide, it brought him to commit an act which weighed most upon his mind, and has weighed on his memory in posterity. This last point we shall return to shortly.

And yet it is not fair to call her his evil genius; that is to lay too great a burden on the poor girl. She has been accused of all manner of things: of being responsible for the committing of her children, even of having borne the children to another lover, and getting Rousseau to think they were his; of having stirred up enmity between Rousseau and his friends; of having, through her intrigues, nourished Rousseau's suspicions and thus caused his constant wanderings through a long period of his life;—of having lived a dissolute life after his death. These charges, however, so far as one can see, are without foundations. Rousseau called her "the only true consolation that heaven has granted me in my misery," and this is confirmed by those near him in the last years of his life. She well deserved the pension voted her by the National Convention of April 14, 1794, and the embrace of the president.

Once again the prospect of a comfortable living was opened to Rousseau. He had become secretary to Francueil, a high financial official, and this patron made him later cashier in the revenue office. But then came the event already described; like a stroke, the inspiration of the new problem took hold upon him. When his *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* appeared (1750), it created a stir, and he felt himself qualified to exercise influence on men and in duty bound to bring his life in accord with his new ideas. A bureaucratic position was in his eyes inconsistent with these. He determined to limit his needs, renounced his well-paying position, his fine linen, and everything that he accounted luxury. Since he could not depend on his literary activities for a living, he sought a steady income through the copying of music. There was no lack of patrons, since many gladly seized the opportunity to see the noted eccentric.

With Rousseau we must expect constant surprises. His next work was an opera. While staying in the country outside of Paris he had composed the opera, *Le Devin du village*, the text of which—as also the greater part of the music—was his work. It is in the pastoral style, but it shows some true poetry of nature and is hence characteristic of Rousseau. Musical critics praised its warmth, its freshness, and the agreement of word and music. Rousseau pointed out that it revealed many of the peculiarities appearing more fully in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. The opera was a great success. Jean Jacques was even driven in the royal carriage to Fontainebleau, where *Le Devin* was presented before the king, Madame de Pompadour, and the whole court. The next day he was to have had an audience, and it was thought he would be granted a pension. Louis XV was quite charmed with the piece and kept singing couplets from it "with the falsest voice in the whole kingdom." Rousseau withdrew and left suddenly for Paris. Some time afterward he took a heated part in a debate on French and Italian music, on the side of the latter.

A new question proposed by the Dijon Academy —on the cause of inequality among men—led Rousseau back to his central problem. The treatise *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*, 1755, with which he—though without winning the prize this time—answered the question, is the most radical and pessimistic of his writings. It is a plea for the state of nature,—without, however, definitely recognizing this state as historic. All the suffering and all the misery that men are cursed with, are their own fault; they have abandoned the state where instinct led them with assurance, where their needs were few, and where the division of labor had not introduced inequality and servitude among them. But he does not demand what his critics facetiously accused him of, that society and property be abolished, and that we should return to the woods and live with the bears. He presents two alternatives. If seeking the peace of one's soul occupies one fully, one should retire to the solitude of nature; if on the other hand one has abilities for an active rôle one should remain in society and try to modify its evils.

On taking up Rousseau's philosophy as a whole we shall return to this remarkable work. Concerning the relation of these two prize dissertations, he wrote: "The principles that I have established rhetorically in my *Discours sur les sciences*, I have examined philosophically in my *Discours sur l'inégalité*.[1]

Before this work was published, Rousseau made a trip with Thérèse to his native city (1754). His literary name assured him of a good welcome, and he enjoyed greatly going about the city. Yet he grieved over having lost his citizenship through going over to Catholicism. To regain it he returned to the Protestant church. There is nothing remarkable about his retracing the steps he had taken blindly as an escaped and starving apprentice. Though he had taken part zealously for a time in the Catholic ritual, the special dogmas and ceremonies had been of little consequence to him. Through Madame de Warens he was in touch—as Eugène Ritter has shown—with the mystic pietists, who were somewhat indifferent to externals. A few years before retracing his steps, he wrote (1751) a letter to one of his friends who had become a Catholic priest, in which he said, that of all the regrettable obligations that bind a man to a superior position, that is the most endurable which provides occasion for doing much good. The letter ends thus:

> I approve of your teaching people all the nonsense of the catechism, if you will only at the same time teach them to believe in God and love virtue; make them Christians

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[1] An oral statement recorded in the *Correspondance de J. J. Rousseau avec L. Usteri,* 1910, p. 165.

> since it has to be, but do not forget the more indispensable duty: of making them good men.

This does not indicate any pronounced sectarian attitude. In the *Confessions* he discusses his return to Protestantism as follows:

> I thought that the Gospel was the same for all Christians, that the essentials in the dogma only offered difficulties on our trying to explain what we could not understand: that the sovereign in every country should therefore define the worship and the inapprehensible beliefs. . . . The association with the Encyclopedists had not shaken my faith but, because of my antipathy to disputes and taking sides, actually strengthened it. The study of man and of the world had shown me a purpose in nature, and had taught me to believe in that Intelligence which directs it. The reading of the Bible, particularly the Gospels, that I had devoted myself to for several years, had developed in me a contempt for the petty and foolish interpretations to which people who least of any were worthy to understand Jesus Christ, subjected his words. Philosophy had, generally speaking, held me firmly to the essentials of religion, but had freed me from the petty formula-worship with which people had obscured it. And since I believed that there were no two ways of being a Christian for an intelligent person, I believed also that all form or discipline in any country belongs under the authority of the law. From this sensible, peaceable, and social principle that brought such cruel persecution upon me, it followed that since I wished to become a citizen of my native country I had to turn Protestant and return to the form of worship existing in my own country.[1]

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[1] VIII.

His restoration was rendered easy for him; and for a number of years now Rousseau was proud to call himself *Citoyen de Genève*. During this residence he was much taken up with domestic politics, into which he had hitherto enjoyed no clear insight. Several of his associates belonged to the opposite party and had been studying zealously the constitutional history of the city. The influence thus exercised upon him was of great significance for his later political philosophy. At this time he revived his plan, conceived in Venice, for a work on political constitutions, which later became the *Contrat social*.[1] In this famous work Rousseau has in mind his own native city.

One other work to gain fame was prepared on this trip. Together with Thérèse he took a sail around Lake Geneva and revisited Vevay and Clarens, where he afterward laid the scene of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*.

Rousseau saw "Maman" for the last time and gave her of his slender means. Thenceforth he forgot her, though he could have been of assistance to her.[2]

Rousseau was so well satisfied with his excursion to Geneva that he returned to Paris intending to make arrangements to settle in Geneva the next spring. He had for a long while been tired of living in a big city. But nothing came of this plan. The *Discours sur l'inégalité* aroused on its publication the wrath of the authorities of Geneva. Then, too, Voltaire had settled in the immediate neighborhood of Geneva and was in active contact with the more cultured and influential families of the city. Rousseau could see that Voltaire's very presence would encourage a political growth which he frowned upon. Voltaire wished to make of Geneva a little Paris, while Rousseau wished his native city freed from the foreign superstructure and preserved in its ancient simplicity.

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[1] Cf. Jules Vuy, *Origines des idées politiques de Rousseau*, 2d ed. (Geneva, Paris, 1889), pp. 150–166.

[2] Cf. Eugène Ritter, *Famille et jeunesse de Rousseau*, pp. 300–303.

He did finally leave Paris. His patroness, Madame d'Épinay, offered him residence in a garden house which belonged to her country estate outside of Paris, near the forest of Montmorency. His greatest wish had long been to live in the country. He even says in the *Confessions* that all his efforts to rise in the world had the one aim of realizing this wish. When in the spring of 1756 he moved out to l'Ermitage, he exclaimed: "So now all that I have wished has been attained!" His friends among the Encyclopedists made fun of him, saying that he would not hold out very long in the country. Of course, he felt that he had come into his element and he lived for a while in a "délire champêtre," exploring the woods and trying all roads and paths. Finally calming down, he took up his literary work, and the period which then opened (1756–62) was the most fruitful of his life, productive of his great work. But it was also a period of stress for him; and he bore with him from the past memories destined to weigh him down more and more.

As we saw, Rousseau considered himself unfit for social life, with its ties and duties. Well, he had always been trying to live like a romantic gipsy. But now the gipsy had taken him a wife and had had children by her. Here he was in social relationships after all! This inconsistency he solved by committing his children, five in number,—as fast as they were born—to a home for foundlings. The first time he did this, it was quite without reflection—merely as following the maxims in such affairs obtaining in the circle of men of the world with whom he went about. Later on, he attempted to account for and defend his procedure: he was poor and sickly, and could not support his children; turn them over to Thérèse's family or to his illustrious patrons he would not. He regarded it as his right as a member of Plato's state to obtain nourishment and to delegate to society the support and education of his children; and he consoled himself with the thought that the children would be better off than if he educated them himself—they would become artisans and farmers instead of vagabonds! The one fact he forgot was that the mortality was very great among foundlings and that they supplied a large contingent to the ranks of the criminals and prostitutes!

He did come to regret most deeply and sincerely what he had done. At the beginning of the *Émile* he wrote:

> He who is unable to fulfill the duties of a father has no right to become one. There is neither poverty, nor works, nor human concerns that can free him from feeding and educating them himself. Readers, take my word for it: I predict that whoever has a heart and neglects such sacred duties will long weep bitter tears over his errors, and will never gain consolation.

This declaration Rousseau regarded as a sufficiently clear confession; but when several years later Voltaire in his anonymous libel aired the affair, he felt the necessity of discussing it in detail in his *Confessions*. In a letter of 1770[1] he comes back to the subject as follows:

> Pity those whom an iron fate deprives of the happiness [of having children to educate]—pity them if they are only unhappy, but pity them still more if they are guilty. I had rather atone for my errors than excuse them. When my reason tells me that I did what I had to do in my position I do not believe it, but believe my heart which sighs and contradicts it.

Such actions as these made Rousseau a puzzle to himself and others. How, he asks in his *Confessions*, could such great enthusiasm for what is good, so warm a heart and so sensitive a nature, be consistent with sinfulness? He finds opposite elements in his being, he cannot fully recognize himself in any of them. Only this much he clings to, that he never wished to inflict suffering; if he has done amiss it has been because he went astray. It is curious to note how his sense for nature, most of which was really a feeling for freedom and independence, brings him into clash with what is most natural in nature. He had reason for directing against himself a charge he aimed at "civilization:" the charge of destroying and denying natural instincts. He wished to live as a gipsy—still, gipsies bear their children with them on their wanderings. This bit of nature Rousseau evaded; and to defend himself he set up sophistries whose fabric was soon pierced by his own feelings. Foundling hospitals are, after all, arrangements of civilization; none such were to be found in the state of nature. One understands readily how much Rousseau suffered from this memory; it hinted at a contradiction in his innermost needs and aspirations.

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[1] *Lettre à Mme B——,* 17 janvier 1770.

In this disturbed frame of mind he broke off abruptly with all the tendencies of his time; first, with that with which he had been most closely associated.

4. THE RUPTURE WITH THE ENCYCLOPEDISTS

Rousseau's fifteen years in Paris had not brought him the happiness that he had looked for, but it had matured him as a writer, especially in the purgatory of his fellowship with the Encyclopedists. It was through their common interests in music that he made friends with Grimm, Diderot, and d'Holbach. He became a contributor to the great *Encyclopédie*, for which he wrote on musical themes, and besides, an article which though entitled *Économie politique* treats rather of the philosophy of law, and is a sketch of the *Contrat social.*

For a detailed characterization of the Encyclopedists I refer my readers to the fifth book of my work on the history of modern philosophy.[1] Roughly speaking, their attempts may be described as the application of the philosophy of Locke and the new science to a criticism of the traditional *Weltanschauungen* and of existing institutions. From Locke they borrowed particularly the principle that all conceptions are derived from experience; of all dogmatic philosophical beliefs they demanded to know to what concrete experience they could be referred. And from Locke they obtained, too, the idea of society as founded on a mutual contract assuring individuals happiness and freedom; all institutions whose workings went counter to this idea were rejected as the products of imperiousness and imposture. From the new natural science they took the idea of the physical world as a great mechanism, and the doctrine of inertia and of the indestructibility of matter. They rejected as delusion all inherited views that did not seem to fit in with these doctrines.

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[1] Harald Höffding, *History of Modern Philosophy.* Translated from the German by B. E. Meyer (London and New York, 1900–1908; 1920).

Voltaire had opened the debate by his *Lettres sur les Anglais* and his exposition of Newton's physics. Later on, Diderot, La Mettrie, and d'Holbach had tried seriously to draw the negative and positive conclusions of the new conceptions of nature. Of these men Diderot had the most significant intellect and was the most important thinker. To him Rousseau stood nearest. Rousseau loved him passionately, and the later rupture pained him profoundly. Diderot was an enthusiast like Rousseau, but his enthusiasm obtained expression in other ways and he did not see the great problem of which Rousseau had had a vision. That his was a questing spirit, not satisfied with the more popular solutions of the problems of existence, for which Voltaire and d'Holbach each in his way stood spokesman, makes him significant in the history of thought, and not alone because of his position in the controversies of the day.[1]

The ideas which Diderot developed, and many of which were not known until some time after his death, point back to Spinoza and Leibnitz, and forward to Goethe, Schelling, and the modern doctrine of evolution. Rousseau had no natural appreciation for this aspect of his reasoning, but all the more for his impassioned personality. The contrast between Rousseau and the Encyclopedists is perhaps nowhere more clearly shown than when Diderot in the *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville*, and Voltaire in *L'Ingénu*, in *Candide*, in *l'Entretien d'un sauvage et d'un bachelier*, in *l'Histoire d'un bon Bramin*, and elsewhere, describes the antithesis of nature and civilization with incisive strokes. But they use this antithesis chiefly to tease and to egg on. What for them was a malicious game, at most an instrument of controversy, was for Jean Jacques a thing of high seriousness that had wrung his entire personality and penetrated it; it was a fruit of his strange career and it ultimately determined his fate. That Diderot should have had influence, especially on the form of Rousseau's dissertations on science and art, and inequality, was possible because they could work together so long as weapons had to be used, though not at all when time came to weigh the results of the battle. At this point it was Rousseau who became the solitary one—most certainly because he saw deeper and further than his former fellow-combatants.

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[1] For Diderot we refer to the thorough and interesting work of Knud Ipsen, *Diderot, hans Liv og hans Gerning* (Copenhagen, 1891).

D'Holbach, a German baron who had been naturalized in France, gathered in his house the dissenting elements of the day. His salon was "the cradle of the *Encyclopédie*." He was a good-natured character, lacking somewhat in independence; the best things in his writings were said to be derived from Diderot. He is to be distinguished from Diderot in his heavy, dogmatic materialism, to which he sought to convert everyone. Particularly in his private circle, of which we get a glimpse through Diderot's masterful descriptions in the letters to Mlle. Voland, he knew no limits in his ridicule and contempt for the old religious conceptions. Altogether, he was inclined, even toward individuals, in spite of his good-naturedness, to carry his jest too far. The jest was particularly hard on Jean Jacques, who lacked presence of mind and was not adept at gathering his thoughts for drawing-room discussions; d'Holbach knew that Jean Jacques could say brilliant things when he got angry, and therefore teased him to excite these "moments d'éclat et de verve."

The third leaf of the clover was Melchior Grimm, also a native German. He lived in Paris as the literary correspondent of various foreign courts that wished to be kept *au courant* in French literature. In the history of literature he stands as one of those who were aware of the transformation which the newly awakened interest in Shakespeare would effect. Sainte-Beuve, in *Causeries du Lundi*,[1] has given an interesting characterization of Grimm which constitutes a necessary counterweight to the description by Rousseau in his *Confessions* dictated by exaggerated suspicions.[2] According to Sainte-Beuve, Grimm is to be taken as a senior contemporary and associate of Lessing and Herder. He was a sharp, skeptical wit; despite his broad literary sense a rational type, and in this respect a contrast not only with Rousseau but also with Diderot. Even less than any of the others of his circle did he understand Rousseau's personality, and he did not hesitate, whenever his mood or his purpose should dictate it, to wound and squelch the sensitive Rousseau, who had no way of hitting back.

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[1] VII.

[2] Not only Sainte-Beuve, but also Saint-Marc Girardin and Scherer take the part of Grimm definitely against Rousseau. After close study, and on the basis of new documents, Eugène Ritter (*Annales de la Société J-J. Rousseau,* 1906) came to a revaluation of the relation of

As Rousseau never came into personal contact with Voltaire the clash with him was of a quite different character and had its own peculiar cause.

There can be no doubt, and Rousseau himself has acknowledged it, as indicated above, that Rousseau learned much from his friends, the Encyclopedists. His thoughts were sharpened, his horizon broadened, and his literary sense awakened. Dusaulx[1] presented a description of J. J. Rousseau's first appearance in the circle of the Encyclopedists, based on information coming from d'Holbach and others of Rousseau's "plus anciens" friends.

It was here that he learned all of the ways of handling the *pros* and *cons*, as he shows in his two letters on suicide, and in several others of the same kind. When he had a subject to treat and even when he had arrived at an opinion, in order to enrich his ideas in all respects and even at the risk of changing his opinion, he would submit it to

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Grimm and Rousseau, and the conclusion is unfavorable to Grimm. Cf. also Frederika McDonald, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau. A New Criticism.* The author must be credited with having discovered new documents. She is a glowing admirer of Rousseau, but her zeal carries her beyond all limits. For a thorough criticism cf. *Annales,* III, 256–267.

[1] *De mes rapports avec Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Paris, 1798).

those that he considered his masters and he invited contradiction or discussion by these men, of whom the majority were well informed upon all sorts of subjects. This, together with his natural eloquence, made him so redoubtable an opponent that soon no one was in a position to resist him, even when he was defending untenable paradoxes. . . . The new friend of baron d'Holbach, circumspect, proper, charmingly sensitive, and with a taste for neatness which singularly elevated the simplicity of his garments, was pleasing to everyone. The most exacting found nothing to object to in his spirit or in his conduct. Those who were counted among the *bon ton* reproached him only for the timidity of his politeness, which seemed to them a bit too provincial; he corrected this, but in doing so threw himself into the opposite excess. Hence, far from being a misanthrope, Jean Jacques was affable, full of confidence, and most communicative. Distrusting not others, but himself, he kept out of action, competing with no one, seeking council rather than forming decisions. Such was Jean Jacques, I have been told, the original Jean Jacques at the time of his début in the capital.

One can see from this description with what protectiveness Jean Jacques was treated in the d'Holbach circle. When he then suddenly sprang forward with his new ideas, they did not take him seriously; and as his sense of self rose after his new vision and his moral reform, the impression prevailing was that his literary success —for which his friends were all too inclined to accept the honor—had gone to his head. They found him, as Dusaulx said, suddenly turned "from white to black."

BEFORE we go thoroughly into the inner, the essential difference between Rousseau and the Encyclopedists, we must dwell for a minute on the outer cause of his break with his former friends. It will reveal what new relations Jean Jacques had got involved in, and how little he had succeeded in escaping the social life for which he felt he was so poorly made.

Rousseau's benefactress, Madame d'Épinay, who had made him a present of the idyllic home near her manor, was the mistress of Grimm. The relation of Grimm and Rousseau cooled little by little. Grimm considered his former friend mad. He did not understand his nature, and with cold, crushing criticism he reproached poor Jean Jacques for the actual or apparent inconsistencies into which he stumbled either through clumsiness and slowness of thought, or through his effervescent enthusiasm. And even if Grimm was not actually jealous of him, he thought nevertheless that since Madame d'Épinay had, besides a husband, a lover, she had no need of a friend. He made it evident that he was dislodging Rousseau from the company of his benefactress. By his assumption of superiority and his contempt he more than once made a fool of Rousseau. It so happened that Madame d'Épinay was planning a trip to Geneva to consult a famous physician there. Rousseau was invited to accompany her, and Grimm and Diderot hastened to urge him to do what they declared to be his plain duty toward his benefactress. Rousseau was in poor health and could not afford the equipment, nor did he look forward particularly to appearing in his native republican city in the suite of a large manor owner's wife. Besides he had the suspicion, never confirmed or disproved,[1] that the actual reason for the journey was to conceal the consequences of Madame d'Épinay's relations with Grimm, and he was incensed at the rôle which his friends wished him to play no less than over their haughty effort to teach him his duty. And still another consideration was added to this, the most characteristic and most consequential of all.

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[1] Eugène Ritter, *Annales,* II, pp. 60 ff., considers it not unlikely.

On his strolls through the woods about l'Ermitage, when Thérèse after a while ceased altogether to go with him, Rousseau gave himself over to erotic-idyllic recollections and fancies. As in his childhood, he loved ideal beings, and built himself a world in which love and friendship reigned without falseness and without tyranny. Pictures that later made up *La Nouvelle Héloïse* were now born in him. While steeped in these dreams he was visited one day by a lady of the nobility who lived near by. Madame d'Houdetot, sister-in-law of Madame d'Épinay. He soon fell fatally in love with her; this was the first time he had truly loved, he asserted. It was a hopeless love, since Madame d'Houdetot had already a lover. Rousseau's frequent visits to her did not pass altogether unnoticed; perhaps, too, Thérèse's jealousy led her to mention the matter; in brief, the affair leaked out, and the entire circle now amused itself over the philosopher and moralist as unhappy lover. D'Holbach even made a trip to the country to see the fun; and gibes hailed down on poor Jean Jacques, who throughout the whole relation played a miserable rôle. Rousseau accused Madame d'Épinay and Diderot of having revealed his secret. One word brought on another, and the break with his former friends became positive.

In the middle of the winter of 1757–58 Rousseau moved out of l'Ermitage—where he could not stay another day, to a house called Montlouis, situated on the further side of the woods of Montmorency. He broke with Diderot when in the preface to his *Lettre à d'Alembert* he referred to him with a Scriptural quotation about a friend that disloyally betrays a confidential secret. The rupture with d'Holbach is said to have occurred before, after a violent scene in d'Holbach's house, where he exclaimed in his indignation over their sham praise of a tragedy he was reading aloud to them, that the host and his friends would take advantage even of a country parson.[1] Rousseau himself said that the break came one day when d'Holbach, without Rousseau's giving him the least cause, in the presence of several persons, treated him so rudely that he resolved never to go into his house again.[2]

The quarrel of the well-known writers aroused much notoriety in Paris, even in the most elegant circles. This fact tempted a man of the high nobility to exclaim, "Ye Gods! Everywhere I go I hear talk of nobody but this Rousseau and this Diderot! Who ever heard of such a thing! People who are nothing, people who do not own their own houses, who even live on the fourth floor!"[3] It was not long before one had to take into consideration these people of the fourth floor—and higher up!

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[1] This scene is described in a letter from one of d'Holbach's friends, reproduced in Ginguené, *Lettres sur les Confessions de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Paris, 1791), pp. 132 ff.

[2] *Confessions,* VIII. Cf. letter to M. de Saint-Germain, February 26, 1770.

[3] *Vide* H. Beaudoin, *La Vie et les ouvrages de J.-J. Rousseau* (Paris, 1891), I, 422.

Just how right and wrong are to be doled out in the externals of the quarrel is hard to say, despite the many historians of literature. That Rousseau did not shine as a hero in this is easily seen. One must own that Madame de Staël was right in saying that one enjoys best the thought of Rousseau alone and out in the open: "When he has to do with men he pleases us less." But this much is certain, he suffered more from the break than his former friends. In his loneliness and his gloom he brooded over the loss, and hatched dark suspicion in his soul. Grimm, d'Holbach, and Diderot got over it easily; they considered him mad, a thankless renegade; and the sorrow over the loss of their friend they soon buried in the motley world they lived in. At the same time, they found willing ears there for their accusations against Rousseau, while the latter was thrown upon his own moods or had to seek relief in pleading his cause before posterity. And this too is certain, that a sympathetic word from his friends would readily have brought about a reconciliation. "Never has a fire been lit in my heart," says Rousseau, "which a tear could not quench." This means they left untried. Contempt and superciliousness—a superciliousness posterity cannot approve—characterized the treatment by the heroes of the "Enlightenment" of "the awkward little usher" (*le petit cuistre*), as d'Holbach used to call him.

The more profound cause of the estrangement must be sought in the oppositeness of character of Rousseau and his friends, and again, in the oppositeness of the cultural tendencies they represented.

Rousseau's friends were still inclined to play the part of Providence for him, to direct his very way of living and to prescribe his duties. They tried to release him from the relation to Thérèse and her family. "One cannot," d'Holbach says, "conceive of a sadder incongruity than that between Thérèse and his genius. Diderot, Grimm, and I organized a friendly conspiracy against this bizarre and ridiculous bond. He was wounded by our zeal and indignant at our disapproval, and from then on turned a true rage upon our anti-Thérèsian philosophy."[1] And this conspiracy before long found a second enterprise. Rousseau

reformed his way of life, renounced salaried work and would support himself copying music. There was then organized "a holy league,"[2] to help him, against his will and knowledge. It was easy to persuade Thérèse to take part in the conspiracy, and his naïveté was exploited to help meet his needs. Each enjoyed his department, the one the food, the other clothing, and so forth. Thus our philosopher was deceived from morning to night, but he managed for a long while without renouncing his independence and systematic poverty.

Rousseau, of course, noticed the secret goings-on, yet could not hinder them. He learned that it is not so easy to be poor and independent as one might think.[1] But when they tried actually to keep him from living in the country and attempted to determine his duties for him, he grew indignant. His friends were to be his friends and not his masters; and benefits, he maintained, ceased to be benefits when imposed. To him gratitude was an unendurable pressure, a limiting of the freedom that was his supreme good. He even declared in a letter,[2] "I have searched myself thoroughly, and have ever felt that gratitude and friendship were incompatible in my heart." This is his reason for rejecting a proffered gift. Later, in a letter[3] to Madame d'Houdetot (1757) he insisted that his friends should bother themselves over his poverty as little as he did himself, but should love him as he was. The more he grew aware of self, the less could he accept the dependence they would subject him to. And the mysterious way they went about helping him aroused his suspicion and gave birth to the systematic belief in a conspiracy, that was to gall him for many years. As early as October, 1757, in letters to Madame d'Épinay and Saint-Lambert, he speaks of a league of friends taking advantage of his poverty to render him dependent. If Rousseau understood but poorly the art of receiving, it can be said that his friends little understood the art of giving.

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[1] From a statement quoted in Ginguené, *Lettres sur les Confessions de Rousseau* (Paris, 1791), p. 132.

[2] See Dusaulx, *De mes rapports avec Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Paris, 1798), p. 27.

Once attaining to stronger independence and a higher realization of his mission, Rousseau felt out of place in the drawing-rooms that his friends frequented. He thought slowly, as we said before, whenever he was challenged from without to think. The conversation, he says,[1] flowed faster than his thoughts could follow: when he had to take part in it he had to talk faster than he could think, and the consequence was that he committed stupidities and nonsensities that turned out welcome material for his "friends'" unsparing criticism. No one stopped to consider the cause of the contradictions, and still less whether back of the apparent inconsistencies there might lurk a deeper logic. Now, Rousseau had no use for ridicule, which, according to him, was "the argument of the stupid, a poison for good sense and good morals."[2] He reproached Molière gravely for having, in *Le Misanthrope*, made an honorable and honest man ridiculous.[3] He could ill thrive in a circle where wit romped light and wanton, and where laughter —rightly or wrongly—was often the only argument.

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[1] *Confessions,* VIII. [2] *Lettre à Mme de Crequi,* 1752.

[3] Translators' note: Cf. Buffenoir, *La comtesse d'Houdetot, sa famille, ses amis* (Paris, 1905).

These people had no appreciation of his need for solitude, and had no insight into what lay behind his paradoxes. They never suspected his problem, and recognized therefore no "mission" of his. They found it only natural that he should begin by surprising the times with remarkable statements; so he had attained to the distinction of a *bel-esprit* and won recognition. But when he took things seriously, they were angered and regarded him as mad or as a hypocrite. For Rousseau, doubt was an unnatural condition, a state in which he could not tarry long. He yearned for something into which he could plunge his whole soul. And, again, he was shocked at the dogmatic tone in which the Encyclopedists delivered their views, especially in private. He mentioned it in *Émile,*[1] "Flee those whose apparent skepticism is a hundred-fold more assertive and dogmatic than the decided tone of their opponents." However vital it was to have a firm personal conviction, still it was his opinion that only charlatans can speak dogmatically on religious matters.[2] Rousseau's originality here lies in the strong emphasis on the personal, subjective aspect of every serious view of life. This enabled him to take hold of the religious problem in a new form that shot beyond the struggling armies of the Encyclopedists and the theologians. Men like Diderot, La Mettrie, and d'Holbach were right in maintaining that the concepts of experience must of necessity exercise—and in reality do exercise—secret influence on our view of life. If our view of life is to be more than a dream in which we seek rest, it must be related as closely as possible with experience. The difficulty is partly in drawing the limits of sure experience, partly in coming to the right conclusions from the true experience. Of this objective side of the problem Rousseau was too little aware. He protested against the dogmatism of the Encyclopedists, but he did not subject the objective aspects to critical examination. He shares the characteristic of the "subjective thinker" on this point; his attitude toward the recognition of the natural world reminds one of Pascal before him, and of Kierkegaard[3] and Carlyle after him. He keeps to the subjective, personal side of the problem, where one's view of life comes as an expression and a result of personal experience—of the need and yearning, the anguish and pain, the guilt and the exaltation, that the subject has experienced within him. It is in this being personally in the grasp of life that Rousseau is great. Through this he pierced to the very sources of the religious life, to the dark well from which issue the higher racial religious as well as the individual views of life. This great faith in life, this genuine enthusiasm, power of sympathy, admiration, and reverence—this it is that ever reconciles one with Rousseau, this which sustained him in his inner and outer wretchedness. No great cause had he for being satisfied with himself, with his human relations, or with the way he was treated—but in the midst of all this, down in the morass onto which his life often opens, there rises a clear and pure ray that turns toward the sun and gleams in the light of day!

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[1] *Rêveries,* IV.

[2] *Émile,* IV. Cf. *Lettre à Vernet,* November 29, 1760.

[3] *Lettre à d'Alembert,* 1758.

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[1] IV.

[2] *Rêveries,* III.

[3] Translators' note: A Danish philosopher of considerable note in

Like his opponents, Rousseau had his dogmatisms. Whereas they published their pronouncements for the certain results of natural science, Rousseau published his religious ideas for the immediate and indispensable end of serving the personal emotions. But his peculiar position as religious thinker is best seen when we set

his own time, 1813–55. Höffding has written a small volume upon him, *Kierkegaard als Filosof,* as well as an article in his *Danske Filosofer.* See Lee M. Hollander, *Selections from the Writings of Kierkegaard,* (Austin, Texas, the University, 1923). Höffding, "Sören Kierkegaard 5 mai 1813—5 mai 1913," *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* (Paris, 1913), Tome 21, pp. 719–732. Georg Brandes, *Kierkegaard und andere skandinavische Persönlichkeiten* (Dresden, 1924).

him beside Voltaire; the religious views of the two men, so far as general import went, about coincided, and Voltaire was sorely vexed that this idiot and hypocrite could ever have written anything like the "Confession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar." But what a difference in the spirit, the sincerity, the close fusion with the experiences of the personal life!

The ultimate background for the quarrel we discover only by concentrating on a problem even more inclusive than the religious one, of which the latter is but a single form. Rousseau champions the right of instinct, *naïveté*, feeling, genius, as against the consciously reflective, artificial, and calculating way of taking life. His protest against civilization is based chiefly on its weakening of life through the dividing of forces.[1] He takes exception to the psychological as well as the social distribution of labor; he wishes life lived in broad, clear, and simple patterns. He takes the contemporary philosophers to task for their unwillingness to acknowledge the notion of instinct, and for overvaluing reason and reflection. He could not brook the daintily sharpened thought, the far-fetched conceit. He set up in contrast to the favorite expression of the time, *bel-esprit*, the conception *belle-âme*. The beautiful soul does not devote itself like the beautiful intellect to interesting, *piquante* combinations, but is enthusiastic, open and honest, is directed by the heart, and is led by it far more safely than by the reason. When he goes astray, enthusiasm has enticed him. The beautiful soul is nature's own work. In *La Nouvelle Héloïse* particularly, this idea plays an important rôle, in a direct attack on the worship of the *bel-esprit.* Rousseau acknowledges that the heart teaches us only the relation of things to us, not the mutual relationship of things to each other, and he constantly concedes that insight into the relations of things to one another is necessary for our judging aright their relation to us.[1] Best of all, for him, would be the great mind (*esprit élevé*) joined to the beautiful soul.[2] But all this exalting of the emotions, the heart, is part of his general problem of civilization. Concerning the beautiful souls, he writes in the preface to *La Nouvelle Héloïse,* "La nature les fit, nos institutions les gâtent."[3]

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[1] It is interesting to compare the relations of Rousseau and the Encyclopedists with those of Tolstoi and the literary circle of Petrograd; *vide* Birukoff, *Leo Tolstoi, His Life and Work,* chap. ix. Tolstoi was a great admirer of Rousseau.

But he contrasts to this sheer intellect not only the heart and the feelings, but also genius. This we have already perceived in our passing discussion of Rousseau's problem of civilization. When he maintained that science and art were not good things, he had in mind, of course, the slavish, secondhand work of the reason, for he referred with admiration to the great minds that had founded the modern intellectual world. Here, too, it was what is original, what issues directly from the hand of "Nature," that he would uphold as against what is derivative, constructed, rationalized. He has given us an exposition of the nature of genius that is most vital in this connection:

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[1] *La Nouvelle Héloïse,* V, Letter 8.

[2] *Lettre à Usteri,* 5 janvier 1764.

[3] "Nature made them; our institutions spoil them."

> Ask not, young artist, what is genius! If you have it, you will feel it yourself; if you have it not, you will never comprehend it. The genius of the musician includes the whole world in his art; he paints all his pictures in sounds, he even makes silence to speak! Thoughts he reproduces in feelings, feelings in the stresses. The emotions which he expresses he arouses in the depths of the heart. . . . Even in painting the horrors of death, his soul bears a sense of life [*sentiment de vie*] that never deserts him and that he communicates to hearts formed for understanding it.[1]

Though Rousseau here (perhaps through the influence of Dubos, whom, as we saw, he knew) points out especially the power of genius to be deeply moved by life and to cause a like movement in others, still he implies in the passage cited, that this deep emotion makes for the creation of forms and terms the mere reason would never be able to find. We must remember that Rousseau is speaking particularly of musical genius. He thus joins the remarkable movement that, coming under the influence of the mighty Shakespearean prototype from the very start of the century, had led the English aesthetic philosophers to exalt the creative imagination of genius as superior to the mechanically combining reason that ruled throughout the Classical period—a movement that later spread to Switzerland, France, and Germany. Heinrich von Stein, in an excellent book,[2] describes this movement that, allied to the emotional tendency deriving from Rousseau, was the most important influence in the creation of the new European literature at the close of the eighteenth century. Stein has shown also that the times were prepared through that movement to receive Rousseau's great works.

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[1] *Dictionnaire de musique.*

[2] *Die Entstehung der Neueren Ästhetik* (Stuttgart, 1886).

Rousseau voiced disapproval of art mainly because he had experienced within himself a greater wealth than the art of the time could afford him; and his becoming himself the founder of an art came of his possessing this greater wealth within, for which he craved expression. As with religion, so with art, he fructifies by opening the way to the original wellsprings. In the work cited, Heinrich von Stein has explained this most interestingly:

> When we have experienced something great in our inner self and, turning our vision outward, seek in the works of nature or of art a picture that somehow agrees in weight and force with what we have lived within us—how many an artistic expression pales that in less significant moments occupied us! Why all this picturization, this echoing, this externalizing, we ask, when the plain reality of the spiritual mood that seized us from within is so much more mighty? Yet by this very exercise we have attained a frame of mind that prepares us better than anything else for original artistic creation, or at least for the embracing of an original work of art in us, with all its completeness. Thus, in the name of art, Rousseau condemns the artistic activities of his day. But his judgment contains the germs of a new art based on deeper spiritual realities.[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 266 ff.

Whatever the form, it is the simple, undivided power of life that Rousseau championed. He marks the important turn when he asserts that everything is by no means settled with criticism of the old, but that a new and positive unfolding of life must be had at any price. If the alternative is between power and enlightenment, Rousseau chooses power, though it be bought with blindness and fanaticism. This turning point is clearly seen on examining his discussion of fanaticism. Bacon and Bayle had both declared superstition and fanaticism worse than atheism. Rousseau undertakes to revise values and defends fanaticism against the "parti philosophique."

> Bayle has also shown quite clearly [he says], that fanaticism is more harmful than atheism, and that is undebatable; but what he took care not to say, and what is still none the less true, is that fanaticism, though bloody and cruel, is yet a great and powerful passion that inspires the heart of man and makes him despise death, provides him a mighty impetus, and that needs only better direction to draw forth the most sublime virtues: whereas irreligion, and in general the rational and philosophical spirit, binds mankind anxiously to life, enervates, and debases the souls. . . . Philosophical unconcern resembles the calm of a state under despotism; it is the calm of death; more destructive than death itself.[1]

This new view of fanaticism, directed against the *esprit philosophique*, Rousseau built up out of his own deeper philosophy that links all thoughts, positive and negative, with life, whence they arise, and upon which they react again. Thus he has proposed the great problem without whose solution all negative criticism is insufficient: to find the wholesome core in the old that it may not be cast away when criticism casts away the shells. This was the task he willed to the greatest thinker among his successors, Immanuel Kant. Here was presented the program of modern intellectual science: to prove the continuity of the cultural life of man through all existing historical forms.[1]

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[1] *Émile,* IV.

Though the rift between Rousseau and the Encyclopedists meant no more in the mind of the time than a literary squabble, on a more searching view it amounts to a great historical turning point.

5. THE BREAK WITH VOLTAIRE

Personal differences such as counted so much in his relations with the Encyclopedists did not enter into his relation with Voltaire, for Rousseau and Voltaire never met personally. Here the opposition in the system of ideas, the general frame of mind, led to the rupture.

Rousseau's initiation into thinking came through the *Lettres sur les Anglais*, the work that may be said to constitute the point of departure of French philosophy of the eighteenth century. He retained his admiration for Voltaire as poet and writer, even after their violent clashes. At first the letters they exchanged were quite friendly. Rousseau had been commissioned, a few years after his arrival in Paris, to revise an opera text that

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[1] *Vide* my book, *The History of Modern Philosophy,* II, 28, translated from the German by B. E. Meyer (London and New York, 1900–1908; 1920); and *Mindre Arbejder,* "Förste Serie," p. 223.

Voltaire had written, and on this occasion the two men had exchanged civilities. But no sooner had Rousseau published the treatise on Inequality than the discord between them set in. Voltaire wrote to Rousseau (1755):

> I have received, Sir, your new book on the human race, and I thank you for it. . . . One could not paint in stronger colors the horrors of human society, from which in our ignorance and our weakness we promise ourselves so much consolation. No one ever used so much intelligence in the endeavor to turn us into animals; one is tempted strongly to go on all fours on reading your book. However, as it is more than sixty years since I lost the habit, I regret to say that it is impossible for me to return to it, and I shall leave this natural way to those who are more worthy of it than you or I.

In his reply Rousseau laid stress especially on the fact that he was not speaking of great minds but of an unassimilated civilization. It was his opinion that the ills of mankind come rather from false knowledge than ignorance. This Socratic point of view he maintained against both the Enlightenment (*les Lumières*) and Orthodoxy. He replied to Voltaire's facetious raillery most elegantly: "Do not try to go on all fours again; no one in the world could be less successful at it than you. You, who have raised us up straighter on our two feet, cannot yourself cease to stand firm on your own."

This was a skirmish, and yet it revealed different ways of looking at things. Soon Rousseau came to look upon Voltaire as representing all that he was opposing. He brought the Enlightenment and Parisian culture with him, and now he had come to settle close to Geneva, Rousseau's sacred city, which above all he wished to preserve from artificial civilization. Voltaire, whom Grimm had called *le premier bel-esprit du siècle*, thought that the goal was indeed attained if only the "Enlightenment" (*les Lumières*) prevailed in "la bonne compagnie;" "his tailor and his lackey" had better remain in ecclesiastical thralldom.[1] It was Voltaire's having the viewpoint of the intellectual aristocracy that incensed Rousseau most. Somewhere Voltaire wrote: "The people will always remain stupid and barbaric; they are oxen, that need their yoke, whip, and hay." Such opinions—doubly contemptible to Rousseau because he did not acknowledge the worthiness of the intelligence that stood as the justification of this intellectual aristocracy—explain the following statement: "I complain particularly at the contempt that Voltaire shows on every occasion toward the poor."[2] Voltaire was likewise in alliance with the political aristocracy. He was a friend to both the French minister Choiseul and the Genevan aristocrats, thus with the very men from whom came later the persecution of Rousseau. Voltaire could sustain these friendships because he published his dangerous books anonymously and, when put to it, blandly denied them, whereas Rousseau kept printing his name on his works. It was not alone Voltaire's wealth that afforded him this superior position over Rousseau; it was his subserviency and pliability; he endeavored, as Goethe said of him, "to be counted among the lords of the earth." "Scarcely anyone," Goethe adds, in his characterization of Voltaire, "has ever made himself so dependent to become independent."[1] And then, of course, Voltaire worked a great deal through ridicule, in Rousseau's eyes a contemptible weapon. To be able to employ it he hesitated at no victim. For this reason his was a cleansing influence—but, at the same time, he could often do violence to what truly deserved reverence. The roughness of his fun and the dogmatic faith in his own enlightenment, brought about what Goethe called his "biased unfairness." Rousseau was not the only victim of this. In Voltaire's judgments of Socrates, of Christianity, of Pascal, of Maillet, the pioneer in the theory of evolution, we perceive the same wanton and shortsighted flippancy. This must be made plain, and yet the significance of Voltaire's great and knightly fight for tolerance and humanity must not be disparaged. This subject was perhaps the sole one in which he had no appreciation for humor, though he himself had recourse to it. And nobody acknowledged more warmly than Rousseau this aspect of Voltaire's character and activities, however deep his antipathy for his other traits.

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[1] Letter of Voltaire to Madame d'Épinay, 1759 (*Œuvres*, ed. Beugnot, VIII, 206). If the anecdote related by Desnoiterres (*Voltaire et Genève*, 2d ed., pp. 138 ff.) is true, Voltaire, one day while dining at home with his friends, who were discussing religious subjects with great liberty, stopped the conversation, it is said, and allowed it to continue only when his servants had gone out; he did not wish to be assassinated or robbed in the night. Émile Faguet (*Dix-huitième siècle*, p. 208) reports some conversations which agree well with this one.

[2] *Œuvres inédites*, Publiées par Streckeisen-Moultou, p. 362.

The quarrel broke out on the occasion of a poem Voltaire wrote when Lisbon was destroyed by an earthquake in 1755. This event shocked the whole age, and people began to doubt how a faith in Providence could be reconciled with such occurrences. Voltaire gave voice most keenly to these doubts in his poem. The event had shaken the optimism he had always embraced, and he criticized the efforts to find a reconciling explanation. His way of thinking is in a sense justified as against the superficial reasons—especially when backed up by Leibnitz' *Théodicée* and a didactic poem of Pope's—offered to show that all was at the bottom good and harmonious.

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[1] *Aus meinem Leben,* XI.

A catastrophe like the one that had occurred could not—according to the poem—be explained as a divine punishment. Could Lisbon, that church city, have been more ungodly than Paris, where people danced on gaily while Lisbon collapsed? To suppose that such disasters are caused by an evil being is fantastical; nor can they be attributed to a good being if this being is thought of as possessing unlimited power. No sense can be attached to the idea of harmony in the whole universal system if all the specific parts suffer. The poem presents a powerful description of this suffering!

Ainsi du monde entier tous les membres gémissent.
Nés pour les tourments, l'un par l'autre ils pérsissent,
Et vous composerez dans ce chaos fatal
Des malheurs de chaque être un bonheur général?
Quel bonheur, ô mortels, et faible et misérable!
Vous criez "tout est bien!" d'uue voix lamentable![1]

[1] Thus all the parts of the earth moan.
Born for torments, one after the other they perish,
And you would in this fatal chaos
Of the miseries of each construct a general happiness?
What happiness, oh mortals, both weak and miserable!
You cry "all is well!" in a lamenting voice.

This poem incensed Rousseau. To him it seemed as though Voltaire's faith was in reality a faith in the Devil. How could he assume that all is evil, and still accept a good God? What is more, he thought it revolting that a man so richly provided with all the good things of fortune should augment the sorrow and the despair of the unhappy with his somber description. Rousseau had himself done some dark descriptions of human life; yet it had ever been his basic thought that the evils were due to men's abuse of their powers. And when he pointed to "Nature" he meant to imply that there was strong hope for redeeming one's self from the abuses.[1] The well of life was to Rousseau still pure and strong, though the water had been muddied, that flowed from it. In his *Lettre à Voltaire* (1756) he formulated his conception in contrast to Voltaire's.

There is no contradiction—he maintains—in joining experience of suffering in the particulars with a harmony of the whole. The assertion: all is good (*tout est bien*),[2] must be rejected, since it clashes with the actuality of suffering. But that the whole is good (*le tout est bien*) we could believe though we could not prove it, for we are not acquainted with the ultimate constitution of the whole, which affords an explanation of suffering in so many places in the world. Rousseau accepts a universal, not a special, Providence. The course of things taken generally, not every specific thing that happens, is to be conceived of as the immediate expression of the working of a divinity. But not from the harmony in the world do we conclude that there is a god; it is the reverse. Because we believe in a god we can accept a harmony in the world. And the belief in a god, again, springs from a personal need. Neither the theists nor the atheists could prove their assertions. Hope, then, casts its lot on the scales, and settles matters. It does not depend on me, whether or not I shall believe: the state of doubt is all too violent for my soul, and I cannot dangle in uncertainty long; the side containing the greatest consolation obtains, and the weight of hope replaces the balance of reason.

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[1] In a later edition of the poem Voltaire added some lines that gave expression to hope. But as Rousseau knew it, it ended thus: "Que faut-il? O mortels, mortels, il faut souffrir,—Se soumettre en silence, adorer et mourir!"

[2] Tout est pour le mieux.

Rousseau answers the theologians with the assertion of the constancy of natural law. If one is to let God interfere arbitrarily, one cannot avoid giving Him the blame for the disaster in each specific case. But, in addition, he maintains that if the reality of evil forbids the acceptance of a God who is both good and omnipotent, why should one rather renounce the goodness than the omnipotence? Given the choice between these two delusions, Rousseau would prefer choosing to sacrifice omnipotence as a divine attribute. What he still calls a delusion became later his positive conviction in *Émile*, IV; still more positively in a *Lettre à M. de Beaumont*, 1763, and in a *Lettre à* . . . 1769. Voltaire also came to this conception later.[1]

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[1] *Dictionnaire philosophique* (1764), and *Le Philosophe ignorant, 1766.* Professor Premontval of the Berlin Academy had, as Renouvier has shown, expounded the same doctrine; also Ludwig Holberg (see *Danske Filosofer,* pp. 14 ff.) independently of the French authors.

Rousseau dwells not only on the personal need for self-sustainment that causes one to maintain hope to the uttermost, but also on the immediate experience of life and the enjoyment of it, to be obtained independently of all external goods,—*le doux sentiment de l'existence indépendamment de tout autre sensation.* This immediate sense of life, the philosophers are likely to overlook—he asserts—when they come to square accounts with existence. And we find it rather among simple, untutored people than among educated and overcivilized people. This tallies with what Rousseau says in some fragments of a later period:

> Ah! to live must be a beautiful thing, since a life that has had so little happiness as mine still would make me regret its cessation.[1] The natural state of a sentient and mortal being like man is to find pleasure in the awareness of his existence (*se complaire dans le sentiment de son existence*).

This state that Rousseau praises is one that lies prior to, or above, reflection. That he does not, however, refer to a senseless, vegetating state is seen in his *Rêveries d'un promeneur solitaire.*[2] His feeling for life, immediate and happily attuned, stirred in him, especially in his random strolls in the country, or as he lay in his boat, which he would let drift with the current. Then he knew a moment in which his heart could exclaim, "Would that this moment could last forever!"—one of those moments that Goethe's Faust in vain longed for. Time vanished for him, there was neither need nor worry, no particular notion insisted on recognition, nor, for that matter, any memories or hopes; and still his whole nature seemed gathered into unity, and the satisfaction that filled his mind issued from his innermost self, a feeling of life itself in its genuineness and completeness. These moments, in which "the will for life," to use Schopenhauer's expression, was slumbering, though life yet stirred powerfully within him, gave Rousseau the most vital experiential proof of the goodness of life. It is his great merit to have discovered this source of happiness; where it murmurs forth there is an oasis, though all the rest of life be but a desert. What the mystics of the Middle Ages found in the dark cells of the cloister, Rousseau discovered in nature. He made mysticism secular, showed its significance as a refreshing power, and the possibility of applying it in every human life.

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[1] Streckeisen-Moultou, pp. 354–356.

[2] Especially V.

By calling attention to the personal need for consolation and hope, and to the immediate sense of life, Rousseau undertook a fundamental revision of the religious-philosophical point of view. This very change appears the more striking through the fact that Voltaire and Rousseau are not, as to dogma, so far apart as one might think. Not their theology, but their basic attitude toward existence, their "cosmic sense of life," is different. Despite all the gloom of life outside and within him, Rousseau was able to preserve the deep realization of the value of life and the great reverence for the heart of life. Voltaire understood no emotion once it became complicated, that is, determined by contrasting experiences. Stupidity or hypocrisy: they were his usual explanation in such cases. In the line,

> Vous criez "Tout est bien!" d'une voix lamentable!

he discovers a contradiction[1] in keeping up courage and maintaining hope in the midst of suffering. Poor Jean Jacques had learned that life is a checkered affair, not to be reduced to any single formula, and that the emotion in which the worth of life shall be substantiated as in a sum, can therefore not be altogether simple. In his inner self, as in his destiny, roses grew among the thistles; but they were roses nevertheless.

Rousseau concluded his letter by stating that in the struggle against superstition and for religious freedom, he stood squarely on Voltaire's side. He even said that he had rather be a Christian after the way of Voltaire than after the way the Parisian theologians would dictate. And he challenges Voltaire to use his poetical talent in describing the religious and moral faith that every society needs.

In his reply Voltaire regrets that sickness prevents his discussing the subject. His actual reply—according to Rousseau—came later—in *Candide.* If this book, whose worth cannot compare with that of Voltaire's other romances (e.g., *l'Ingénu*), was intended as a reply to Rousseau, it bears witness to Voltaire's scant understanding of the latter. He expands on what he wrote in the poem on the fall of Lisbon. The sentence concerning which he becomes satirical, "The misfortunes of the individual make up the general good fortune," Rousseau had emphatically rejected. Voltaire's criticism hits hard at the systematic optimism of Leibnitz and Pope, not Rousseau's point of view. And when, finally, he points to simple, ordinary work—"to cultivate one's garden"—as the sole solution, he has reached the same conclusion as Rousseau: that the problem is not to be solved theoretically, but solely through personal will, and that one must return to the outstanding, simple values of life, that never fail.

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[1] As in *Candide.*

Rousseau's letter to Voltaire was meant only for the latter. Nevertheless it was printed a few years later, and Rousseau wrote then (1760) to Voltaire to inform him that this publication had occurred without his permission. But he seized the opportunity to declare that he had no love for him, although he remained an enthusiastic disciple; for Voltaire had ruined Geneva, and estranged its inhabitants from Rousseau. "It is no fault of mine," he writes, "that I cannot do honor to anything in you but your talents."[1] It is not strange that this declaration had no softening effect on Voltaire. Besides, several other things contributed to throw oil on the flames. When Rousseau's books were burned and he himself was persecuted, while Voltaire's anonymous, yet all too well known, books were tolerated in France and Geneva, because Voltaire was on good terms with the authorities, Rousseau could not help becoming sarcastic over the situation, in the *Lettres de la montagne*. By this time Voltaire was in a rage and he wrote the anonymous libel *Sentiments des citoyens*, to be found in Beugnot's edition.[1] He refers to Rousseau as a man still suffering from the consequences of his debauchery, and one who dragged about with him from town to town an unhappy woman whose mother he had killed and whose children he had gotten rid of,—a man who had "relinquished all natural feelings and abandoned all honor and religion." The piece was presented under the mask of a Genevan theologian, and the mask was so carefully held to, that Rousseau to his last day thought the author had been one of his early friends, a clergyman in Geneva. The accusations contained in this letter caused Rousseau to change the plan of his autobiography, for he recognized the necessity of confession and defense in order to stand cleansed before posterity.

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[1] In a letter to Vernet (November 29, 1760), Rousseau called Voltaire "ce beau genie et cette âme basse." Frederick the Great wrote (in a letter written in 1749), "On admire son esprit (de Voltaire) dans le même moment òu l'on méprise son caractère." Zeller, *Friedrich als Philosoph* (Berlin, 1886), p. 22.

In his private letters Voltaire characterizes Rousseau in the most violent and scornful terms. "Rousseau is a false brother, a Judas, who has betrayed philosophy, a mad dog who bites everybody, a Diogenes—or, rather, a bastard of Diogenes (although at times he writes like Plato)," and so on. His books fared no better. *La Nouvelle Héloïse* seemed to Voltaire to have been written in a brothel—so far as the first half went—and as to the second half—in a madhouse. Concerning *Émile*, it was Voltaire's opinion that it would be forgotten after a month's time—excepting some thirty pages,[2] "which it is a shame that wretch ever had the luck to write."[3] Voltaire set out to muster all in the fight against *l'in-*

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[1] XLII, 76

[2] "The Confession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar."

[3] "Il est affreux qu'il ait eté donné à un pareil coquin de faire le Vicaire Savoyard." (*Œuvres*, LXIII, p. 212.)

fâme, the tyranny of the Church, and suddenly he felt himself attacked from behind. One finds at any period persons so deeply concerned in the contemporary strife of parties that they will consider anyone not taking their side as belonging to the opposing party. They overlook the new possibilities, the new points of view, that might lead far beyond what the passing cliques could glimpse.[1]

In a certain sense it is impossible to judge between Voltaire and Rousseau. Somewhere Rousseau wrote that criticism and satire were only good for polishing the lamp; but it is just as important to clean the lamp as to fill it with new oil. Rousseau and Voltaire had each his mission. The tragedy is that each could not fulfil his mission according to the light of his own personality without clashing. One must credit Rousseau with never having retracted his gratitude to Voltaire or denied his admiration. When toward the end of Voltaire's life a statue was proposed in his honor, Rousseau subscribed, despite his poverty. Voltaire, who could not forget so readily, sought in vain to have the name struck from the list!

And should we ask where lay the seeds of the new day, of the new faith, the new poetry, the new philosophy, there can be no uncertain reply. A great thing it is to have removed the shells of the past, but greater to have taken care that there were provided seeds for the growth of the future.

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[1] Turgot, who counted all sects as harmful, considered the Encyclopédistes a sect. The evil lay in the fact, he thought, that to sustain one's own party, one suppresses or twists truths that might hinder its progress. (*Vie de Turgot,* by Condorcet [London, 1786], p. 28.)

6. ROUSSEAU'S CHIEF WORKS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE LATTER PART OF HIS LIFE

In the woods near Montmorency Rousseau forgot Paris and the false friends, and abandoned himself to his imagination. We have already considered the direction his imagination took. He explains his moods and his fancies in these days as a reaction to the tone of prophecy in which, after his inspiration and his moral reform, he began to address the age. Sorrow over never having truly loved—"Maman" was too motherly, and Thérèse really but a housekeeper—and the sense of injustice that this sorrow induced, often moved him to tears, that he abandoned himself to, voluptuously ("que j'aimais a laisser couler"). "Mollesse trop séduisante!" he exclaims.

Rousseau's inner life is, in fact, rich in opportunities for the study of the effects of contrasting emotions. As entanglements and meanness gave place in him to repentance or to enthusiastic exaltation, so the firm outward stand was followed by the inner wave of his moods and the light play of fancy. Another side of his personality was claiming its rights. It led him again into inconsistency—for it brought him, who had but recently protested against literature and art, to write a novel. This inconsistency he was aware of, and he honestly acknowledged that the sole explanation of it was in the strength of the conflicting elements within his personality. Contrasting effects of this sort are to be observed in everyone; but only in a nature like Rousseau's is each link of the inconsistency rounded out in its full "exhausted" quality. In the preface to *La Nouvelle Héloïse* he wrote: "We are expected ever to be consistent. I do not believe it possible for a person; but what is possible is ever to be honest—and that I shall strive to be."

Imagination created first a world of perfect beings, beautiful and noble women, good and faithful friends—such as reality had not revealed to him. Later he shaped his creations into more clear-cut and earthly forms, and we saw who his model was. The scene of events was laid in places in his memory bathed in a strange light—to Vevay and Clarens on Lake Geneva. Byron thought that no other spot fitted the subject Rousseau wished to treat in *La Nouvelle Héloïse:*

> Clarens, sweet Clarens, birthplace of deep Love!
> Thine air is the young breath of passionate thought,
> Thy trees take root in Love. . . . [1]
> 'Twas not for fiction chose Rousseau this spot,
> Peopling it with affections; but he found
> It was the scene which passion must allot
> To the mind's purified beings. . . . [2] 'Tis lone
> And wonderful, and deep, and hath a sound,
> And sense, and sight of sweetness; here the Rhone
> Hath spread himself a couch, the Alps have reared a
>   throne.[3]

At first Rousseau made notes of his fancies without thinking of writing a book. When he conceived the plan of a novel, he intended to sing the praises of love and present a defense of its natural rights and its purity, in a new form, one which would serve him in his championing of nature against civilization and society. This thing in particular caught the ear of the times when the book appeared. Here were described passionate love and complete abandonment without the affectation, the coquetry and flightiness that the literature of the day was full of. Here was love on a greater scale than they were accustomed to see. It was the old, old subject, yet eternally new, resumed and treated with a freshness and an enthusiasm Rousseau always commanded when working with his whole soul. And here his own personality disclosed one of its essential elements. That the book could not escape being a child of the age is self-evident, but no reader versed in the history of literature will fail to note the gushing of the new streams.

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[1] Translators' note: *Childe Harold:* Canto III, Stanza XCIX.

[2] *Ibid.*, CIV.

[3] *Ibid.*

The chief character, Julie, is a beautiful soul. She follows the gospel of her own heart without needing reason or the help of external authority. She gives herself fully, risks everything, that her love may conquer. The lover, Saint-Preux, is a passive nature, quite dependent on Julie, who acts for him and at every point settles their common fate. The catastrophe occurs when the relation to the young man of lowly condition and of the middle class encounters opposition in her aristocratic family. She faces the choice either of bringing despair to her parents, yes, even causing her invalid mother's death, or of renouncing her lover—and, after a hard struggle, decides upon the latter. She marries the man of her father's choice, and as soon as she becomes his wife she smothers her passion under the sense of duty.

Here another *motif* crops up, one that governed Rousseau in his final composition of the book. He sought not only to glorify the right of love and its purity, but also the sanctity of marriage. And this moral teaching, in his eyes, was to serve as the excuse for his novel. Whereas, in "cultured" circles, a young girl's misstep was pitilessly condemned, a wife's infidelity caused only a smile, and they preferred that the mother should have twenty lovers rather than that the daughter should have one. It was against this that Rousseau struck, and thus a certain consistency can undeniably be traced between the two tendencies of the book. But by undertaking both of them he had brought upon himself the immense task of describing the metamorphosis of Julie's character; for in her person both tendencies meet, and this problem he was not able to solve. Only in an external sense does the transformation occur. Yes, Rousseau acknowledges that the metamorphosis is only an apparent one. For just as the medieval Eloïse continued to love Abélard in spite of the monastic oath, so Julie continues to love Saint-Preux despite the marriage vows. In one of the most beautiful, most poetical scenes in the book, —the outing to La Meillerie, her unexpressed feeling pushes its way forth and in her extremity she confesses that she has never ceased loving Saint-Preux. She dies young, through an accident. We are left in the dark as to how things would have gone if she had lived. The teaching which is built up with so much apparatus, to prove the possibility of complete resignation, leads only to contradictions in the book.

A third *motif* played its part in the working out of the book. He used the action in it as a frame for his various social, pedagogical, and religious ideas; and the epistolar form of the book made it easy to include long but necessary digressions for unburdening himself. Many of these expositions are actually to be found in the letters of Julie. Here too she might remind us of her medieval prototype, who—though, perhaps, especially to give opportunity for an extended correspondence—among other things, sent Abélard a long list of theological theses;—the difference being, however, that Julie rather declaims than inquires. The young girl is altogether very fond of preaching and calls herself facetiously "la prêcheuse." However great the interest these may have for us, their effect is rather tiring and they seem decidedly in the wrong place. Rousseau often has difficulty arranging so that his characters may at all times and in all situations find pen and ink at hand.

Still another purpose lies back of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, especially the last half. In Julie and her husband, M. de Wolmar, Rousseau wished to describe two noble beings, the one a believer, the other a freethinker. In this description he wished to reduce the antithesis between the Encyclopedists and their opponents, who now, according to what he says in the *Confessions*, had become so violent that the breaking out of civil war was to be feared. The spirit of her religion was not that of the Church; it was Rousseau's own faith, only of a more marked mystical character.

We leave to the history of literature the consideration of this strange book in its details, and for its place in the development of the novel. We shall note here only such elements as are characteristic of Rousseau. First of all, the atmosphere of passion, of sentimental infatuation and enthusiasm, that bursts out wherever the author himself is not wrapped up in the artifices of his time, or in his own rhetoric, or in love with his own theories. In the description of love, the chief theme of the book, this atmosphere is particularly noticeable. That love is a serious thing becoming "la grande affaire de notre vie" has perhaps never been more deeply or more thoroughly shown than in Julie's character. In proclaiming the purity of the relationship of love when it is truly the voice of nature that one hears through it, Rousseau, as already remarked, was embarked upon the essential theme of his life.

> Is true love not the most chaste of all bonds? [asks Julie]. Is not love itself the purest and at the same time the most vital aspiration of our nature? . . . Does it not wreck the mean and creeping souls while it inspires the great and strong souls, and does it not ennoble all the emotions, does it not redouble our self, and does it not lift us above ourselves?

In contrast to the law of social inequalities the love relationship points to a higher law that makes all equal; but here Rousseau's art has deserted him, or rather his inappropriate moralizing has crushed his art.

In Julie he has described a person of feeling, "une belle âme." She lived in feeling and let her life be led by it. Feeling rises to sentimentality in many scenes, and especially when Saint-Preux after an excited situation even addressed the feeling itself: "O sentiment, sentiment! douce vie de l'âme! quel est le cœur de fer que tu n'as jamais touché! . . ."[1]

In the description of life in the country, in plain circumstances but in the midst of nature's splendor, Rousseau gave free reign to his fondness for the idyllic and for nature; and he seized every opportunity to praise the country at the expense of the cities and to argue against the strong migration of the country population to the cities as a dubious sign of the time.

The book appeared at the beginning of the carnival of 1761 and created a great stir.[2] The advance accounts of the book had caused keen anticipation, and the book dealers were besieged by people asking for it. Fifty printings were issued between 1761 and 1800. Rousseau says of its first effect:

> Opinions were divided among the literary men; but among the people there was only one verdict; and the women particularly were infatuated with the book and its author. . . . [3] It is strange that the book should have been received better in France than in the rest of Europe, though the French men and women are treated none too well in it. Contrary to my expectations, it succeeded least in Switzerland and most in Paris. Do friendship, love, virtue, then, hold higher sway in Paris than elsewhere?

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[1] "O sentiment, sentiment! sweet life of the soul!
What heart of iron hast thou not touched!"

[2] General Thiébault describes in his *Mémoires,* I, 136, the impression the book made on him as a young man: "From the very first I was in a delirium; in fact, I did not read, I devoured. The days were not sufficient, I made use of the nights; and from emotion to emotion, from disturbance to disturbance, I arrived at the last letter of Saint-Preux, no longer crying but shouting, bellowing like an animal."

[3] *Confessions,* XI.

Doubtless not; but that exquisite feeling which captures the heart at sight of them, and which makes us cherish in others emotions pure, tender, and honest that we no longer have, still hold sway there. Corruption is always the same everywhere: there exists in Europe no longer morals or virtues, but if there still exists love for these it is in Paris one should seek it.

In the same year in which this novel was shaped in his head and heart, his two other main works, the *Contrat social* and the *Émile*, were formed. The fundamental theme of the three is the same. In *La Nouvelle Héloïse* love and the idyllic in nature were set up as against culture. In the *Contrat social* natural freedom is championed. "Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains;" thus the book opens. In *Émile* natural goodness was contrasted with social and civilized bungling; the book's first words are: "Everything is good that comes from the hand of the Creator; everything degenerates in the hands of man." In these assertions we still hear echoes of Rousseau's first paradoxes, but the works themselves were to afford the more complete explanation and delimitation of them.

Ever since his stay in Venice Rousseau had been making historical and political studies and had constructed the plan of a large political work. The visit to Geneva had brought him new impulses and new historical material. In his article, "Économie Politique," in the great *Encyclopédie*, he had treated the subject tentatively. The *Contrat social*, which appeared in 1762, is the conclusion to these studies. This article represents the most radical application of the rights of nature by consistently maintaining the thought that might can never be right, "force ne fait pas droit," the main idea of the book. Every exercise of might to be justified must be an expression of the will of the people, an expression of an actual or a tacit agreement. By the will of the people is not meant at any particular time the will of all the living individuals (*volonté de tous*), but the will which sustains the life of the people through several shifting generations (*volonté générale*). A people cannot cast off its authority, for no individuals in any period can bind the whole people whose life never is concluded. Rousseau carries out the idea of the sovereignty of the people which arose in the Middle Ages, and especially the doctrine of the inalienableness of that sovereignty, on which doctrine he supported himself in his history of his native city. In the letter of charter ("les franchises") of Geneva of 1387, this independence is insisted upon with great force, and this document played still in Rousseau's day an important rôle in political discussions in Geneva. In a sketch of the *Contrat social*, preserved in the Library of Geneva, one can see that Rousseau had his native city in mind in planning this famous work.[1]

The doctrinal character of the *Contrat social* has been greatly exaggerated. During the Revolution, the book was used, particularly by Robespierre and Saint-

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[1] *Vide* Jules Vuy, *Origines des idées politiques de Rousseau,* 2d ed. (Geneva, Paris, 1889), pp. 11, 181, 187. Concerning the importance that the idea of the sovereignty of the people had already had in the religious controversies of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see Otto Gierke, *Johannes Althusius und die Entwickelung der naturrechtlichen Staatstheorien* (Breslau, 1880), pp. 123 ff.

Just, as a canon of eternal political truths to be carried over into life directly from paper. And many of the opponents and critics of the Revolution, even Taine, in his great historic treatise, thought them justified in their supposition. Those who read in it any single political doctrine pretend to an understanding of it better than Rousseau's. He was not satisfied with it. Once in his later years, Dusaulx relates, that in giving a short characterization of several books shown to him, Rousseau said, on coming to the *Contrat social*, "Those who pride themselves on understanding it thoroughly are cleverer than I; it needs rewriting, but I have neither the strength nor the time to do it." The book itself shows clearly that it was never Rousseau's opinion that a constitution could be constructed that would work everywhere. And, indeed, that idea is contrary to his whole way of thinking. Denying as he does the possibility of a single saving civilization appropriate for every phase, he also denies the possibility of a single saving constitution.[1] When, later, he was invited to write the outlines of a constitution for the use of Corsica and of Poland, he acted in accordance with this attitude. He explained to his Corsican correspondent that perhaps after he had lived some time in the country he might become its historian, but he turned down the invitation to write a constitution for it. In his treatise on the form of government of Poland, he declared that no foreigner can provide any country with its laws, and, besides, that national customs and social traditions are of greater significance than positive or prohibitive laws. He recommends caution in reforms—thus, as to physical properties: Do not liberate the bodies before the souls! And he drives home the point that a country is always weak in a period of change in constitution.

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[1] *Vide* particularly, *Contrat social,* II, 8, 12; and III, 9.

On comparing the *Contrat social* with the *Discours sur l'inégalité* one sees clearly the change in Rousseau's conception of the relation between the state of nature and life in society. In the earlier treatise, the necessary progress of things led to tyranny; in the *Contrat social* it is only through abuse that bondage enters,—namely, when the government puts its particular will in the place of the will of the people, the organ of which the government should be;[1] but yet significant benefits are arrived at through the transition from the state of nature to the social life. Justice replaces instinct, right and duty replace direct incentive. Should freedom be limited, there would be, on the other hand, possibility of a higher development of the faculties,—of thought and of feeling. In short, man, from a dumb animal, becomes a spiritual being. But unfortunately, Rousseau adds, misuse of the new condition often lowers him below its natural level![2] Such an exposition as this reveals a totally different way of thinking from that which obtains in the earlier treatise.

Despite all the reservations Rousseau had made, the book was still so radical in its principles that the governments both in monarchistic France and in the republics of Geneva and Berne undertook serious measures against it and its author. Here it shared the fate of his third and most important work.

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[1] III, 10.

[2] I, 8.

Émile, according to Rousseau's own statement,[1] is not a pedagogical treatise but a philosophical work attempting to square the faith that man is good by nature with the evil that experience reveals. The book intends to show how all vices are explained through a study of the history of the human heart; and the system of education which it expounds serves only as its framework.

Rousseau demands reliance on experience; and he demands construction, not destruction. He begins by saying that we do not know childhood at all. And the knowledge of human nature, especially that of the child, which his book would offer, is for him of greater significance than the method he recommends. The most vital education is, after all, that which nature herself gives through the spontaneous unfolding of capacities and instincts; all other influences and all other interference must be subordinated to this. The pupil must learn of his own experience, and through self-activity be the pupil of nature, not of mankind. The education received from man therefore shall, at any rate in the earlier period, be a negative one; that is, it should consist in fending off harmful influences, not be positive, not directly communicative. And Rousseau emphasizes not only experience taken abstractly; he puts great emphasis on the contention that every person has his own particular nature, which must determine how it is to be treated. This is the very reason why one should proceed carefully with education and at first limit one's self temporarily to seeking to know nature herself.—

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[1] *Lettre à Cramer,* 1764.

"Epiez donc longtemps la nature!"[1] Yes, every period of the single individual's life has its peculiar nature and therefore also its peculiar completeness. No period of life, especially not childhood, should be made into a mere means of getting to the next. *Émile* is the gospel of childhood. It contends that childhood is an independent part of life, not only a preparation for adulthood. This is the kernel of Rousseau's pedagogy. "My method," he says, "is adjusted to the capacities of man in his different ages, and is based on occupations appropriate for these capacities."

This natural principle Rousseau maintains against both the Enlightenment and Orthodoxy. In this very fundamental notion he adopts this double front. The enlightening of the intellect as well as the planting of the definite dogmas are to be avoided as long as possible. The goodness of nature consists in there being from the very start—before the reflective powers have awakened, and before the demands and customs of society have interfered—a harmonious balance of capacity and need. The task then is to maintain this harmonious relation after reflection, imagination, and social influence have begun their work. The education by nature proceeds slowly, but men are inclined to intervene too soon. Therefore, it is one of the most important precepts for genuine spiritual culture ("la bonne culture") to retard the development ("tout retarder tant qu'il est possible").

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[1] Rousseau has emphasized the differences of individuality in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and in other writings as well as differences in time and nationality. As Joseph Texte (*J. J. Rousseau et les Origines du cosmopolitanisme littéraire* [Paris, 1895], pp. 333 ff.) has shown, it followed from this that there could be no universal taste but only a taste corresponding to a given stage of development,—all agreeing well with Rousseau's general views.

Locke, who in so many respects is Rousseau's precursor, thought that one should reason as much as possible with the child. Rousseau declares himself definitely against this. Reason, according to his conception, is not a special individual faculty but develops only after the other faculties have developed. To produce a rational creature is the aim of education: how then can one begin by considering the creature as rational? That would be to start at the end and to make the product its own instrument. Our concepts come from without, whereas our emotions come from within and therefore develop first. Emotion and passion are the compelling forces in the process. Man can only make his own what awakens his interest, but the possibility of interest depends upon the stage of development of the individual. Too early enlightenment of the intelligence gives a word-wisdom, not insight, and weakens the moral power.

So that the child shall not acquire concepts with which it cannot associate any meaning, and which do not correspond to its genuine powers and needs, Rousseau advocates postponement of religious training to adolescence. It is here that Rousseau inserts the famous "Profession de foi du Vicaire Savoyard" to demonstrate the spirit in which religious instruction should be given. It presents the gospel of the feelings and of the heart in definite contradistinction to the Church and to the philosophy of the Enlightenment. The heart's need for consolation and hope is the final criterion. Whatever has no significance in the emotional life is shoved aside, if it is not actually rejected. Whether the world is eternal or created, whether there is one or several principles, thereof I know nothing, and these problems do not concern me: *Que m'importe!*—Only what vitally concerns the immediate relationship with God, Rousseau would formulate as a dogma, and there those great cosmic questions play no part.

After expounding the truths of a natural religion through an attack on materialism, he criticizes positive religion, especially the belief in miracles and eternal damnation. Positive religion builds on historical transmission through sacred books, and therefore presupposes altogether too much learning. Here too, Rousseau appeals to nature: The worship of the heart is alone the true. The Vicar's last counsel to the young man he is addressing is: "Prepare your soul in such a state that you will ever wish there should be a God, and then you will never doubt it!"

On the publication of his main works Rousseau enjoyed the approval of his distinguished friends. Malesherbes, at the head of the censorship, a liberal man, who had saved Diderot's *Encyclopédie* at a critical moment, read the manuscripts for him. Rousseau felt quite safe, for on reading the Savoyard Vicar's confession of faith to a friend, the friend exclaimed: "Why, citizen, that is to be found in a book that was printed in Paris." When, in the winter of 1761–62, he was restless and worried, depressed as he was because of a diseased condition (he suffered from a painful bladder malady), and the printing of his work was accidentally interrupted, he conceived the supposition that the Jesuits, whose principles of education were quite the opposite of his, were trying to distort the sense of his book! Hence to save the most important portion he left a copy of the "Confession of Faith" with a friend in Geneva. That there should be just at this time talk of the dissolution of the Jesuit order, he attributed to rumors the Jesuits themselves had spread to put their enemies off their guard—it is peculiar of Rousseau that he could spin out a whole scheme on the basis of a grievance and accidental occurrence. They succeeded in reassuring him, the printing soon resumed its regular course, and—a rare occurrence for Rousseau—he perceived that he had been tempted into false suspicions.

The book appeared, then, shortly after the *Contrat social,* in the spring of 1762. It was not discussed widely, and Rousseau felt a certain reserve on the part of his friends. Only a few thanked him cordially for it, among them the mathematician Clairaut, who declared that it had rewarmed his old heart. It is notable that Malesherbes shortly after the publication asked for the return of his letters; but Rousseau sensed no danger. Indeed, persecution did come from the very opponents of the Jesuits. The Jansenist parliament, wishing to show that in crushing the Jesuits it was not lukewarm in its faith, on July 9, 1762, condemned the *Émile* to be burned, and issued an order of arrest for the author. His friends sent an advance messenger to Montmorency. In the middle of the night Rousseau was awakened and left just before the men of the law arrived. Some have thought that his distinguished well-wishers hastened the flight because it might be inconvenient for them if their *protégé* appeared in court; Rousseau himself had a notion that the whole affair was not quite as serious as it seemed on the first scare. Nevertheless, in the France of that day, where skepticism and fanaticism wrestled with one another and changed places not alone among those who governed but also among the people, one could not be sure of anything, as may be seen from various notorious trials,—among others that of de La Barre, which gave the cautious and reassured Voltaire a sudden desire to undertake a trip to the baths in Switzerland, and to ask the King of Prussia for a retreat for himself and the other philosophers. Some recent researches have shown that actual danger did exist.[1]

When Rousseau reached the Swiss border he alighted from the coach and kissed the earth, to the great astonishment of the postillion. But he was disappointed in his expectation of reaching the land of freedom. He lodged temporarily with a friend in Yverdun, in the vicinity of Berne. In Geneva the *Contrat social* and the *Émile* were burned as early as June 19, and orders for the arrest of the author were issued. He could not very well go there. Soon the Berne government forbade him residence in its district. He then took refuge in Neufchâtel, which was under the government of Frederick the Great.

Here he led for several years an idyllic existence in the village of Motiers, like that he had led in Montmorency. In these years he cultivated an interest in botany and enjoyed new incentives for strolling about in nature. During his sojourn here he wrote an answer to the Archbishop of Paris, who had published a pastoral letter against the author of *Émile*. In his letter[1] he gives a clear statement of his religious and pedagogical views.

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[1] *Vide* G. Lanson, *Quelques documents inédits sur la condamnation et la censure de l'Émile, etc.* (*Annales de la Société, J.-J. Rousseau,* 1905, pp. 95–115).

When they refused to lift the ban in Geneva against him and his books, which Rousseau considered illegal, he renounced his citizenship in Geneva, of which he had been so proud, and as a reply to a Genevan lawyer's attempt to justify the procedure against him, published his *Lettres écrites de la montagne* (Amsterdam, 1764). The full presentation of his religious ideas, especially the criticism of the miracles in this work, aroused the wrath of the Neufchâtel clergy. They preached against him, and even Frederick II's attempts to get the zealous ministers to keep the peace were in vain. The rabble were incited against him and he had to flee. For a few months he lived on the idyllic island of St. Pierre on the lake of Bienne, where he led a life quite after his own tastes. His description of his way of life here[2] belongs among the best and most beautiful he has written. He would gladly have lived the rest of his life here, but the island belonged to Berne, and the Berne government expelled him. He thought now of taking refuge in Corsica, or moving to Berlin. But he was persuaded finally to accept the invitation of the philosopher David Hume to go with him to England, where he would be taken care of.

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[1] *Jean-Jacques Rousseau, citoyen de Genève, à Christophe de Beaumont, archevêque de Paris, Duc de Saint-Cloud, pair de France, etc.* (Amsterdam, 1762).

[2] *Vide* especially *Rêveries,* V.

Hume and Rousseau were of very different natures, but Hume had a genuine sympathy for his French friend. Rousseau found a cosy house in the country, and for a time everything went well. Then developed through the influence of morbidness and the recent persecutions a restless and suspicious state of mind that amounted almost to insanity, that actually in some situations did lead to temporary madness. He fled suddenly from England, launched the most bitter accusations against Hume and others; and for several years wandered about in France. He believed himself the object of systematic persecution on the part of his former friends. Everywhere he came he thought he could detect traces of their intrigues, aimed at humiliating him and rendering him dependent. It was about this time that his *Confessions*, begun several years back, was transformed into a defense. To use it as a weapon against his hidden enemies he went to Paris in 1770, and gave readings in various circles from the *Confessions*. This step brought only disappointment; the interest shown in the readings did not concern his cause but only the piquant revelations and anecdotes. The readings (at the request of Mme. d'Épinay) were finally forbidden by the police.

In Paris he made a living, as formerly, by copying music. In his leisure he composed or botanized. The attempt to explain and justify himself he could, however, not renounce. It was as if he felt how incomprehensible his personality must be for the world unless he did everything he could to throw light on it. He wrote then the three dialogues which went under the common title: *Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques*. The first of these he tried in vain to deposit on the high altar of Notre-Dame Cathedral in order to save it from his enemies and to arouse the attention of the young King Louis XVI to his situation. In the last entries with which he busied himself, *Les Rêveries d'un promeneur solitaire*, reigns a mild resignation and a highly poetic spirit.

He spent the last months of his life back in the country at Ermenonville, outside of Paris. He died here suddenly on July 2, 1778. The idea that he committed suicide is altogether without foundation. He enjoyed as little peace in the grave as he had in life. In 1794 his corpse was moved from Ermenonville to the Panthéon, and placed beside that of Voltaire. The sarcophagi were moved in 1821 to the basement of the Panthéon, and up again in 1830—they shared the fate of the ideas of the Revolution.

Rousseau was the martyr of the contradictions of his own nature, and of the contradiction between his ideal and the existing order of things. But because of these sharp inner and outer contradictions, the ideal stood out for him in purest splendor; and in accordance with the law of contrast he knew in his best moments an enthusiasm and a blessedness such as few men have known. Hence it was that the "poor Jean-Jacques" loved life and believed in life.

IV

Rousseau's Philosophy

1. ROUSSEAU'S FUNDAMENTAL IDEAS AND THE CHARACTER OF HIS THOUGHT

PHILOSOPHICAL ideas have, on the one hand, the significance of symptoms of what is brewing in the times and rises to consciousness in the great minds; on the other, they provide points of view for looking at life and the world, and hypotheses concerning the interrelations of life and the world. Rousseau's philosophy belongs definitely to symptomatic philosophy; we could hardly, from the above description of his life and personality, expect anything else. A fundamental type can be determined revealing himself through the coördination of the essential conceptions with which he works, a type offering a striking analogy to his life, his character, and his endowments. The symptomatic or subjective constitution of his thought by no means precludes inner consistency. Rousseau has himself (in the third dialogue of *Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques*) rightly insisted on a definite coherence within his writings which shows itself in the way he works step by step back to the assumptions that support his views, but which he was not able to define clearly until the *Émile*. The consistency shows itself in this very penetration of the chief ideas through all his important works, and their closer determination and definition. The fundamental type of Rousseau's thought appears in the antithesis between the immediate, the original, that which is complete in itself, the total, the free, and the simple, on the one side; and what is derived, relative, split up, dependent, and complex, on the other. The former is the absolute self-unfoldment of life sustained by one's own inner strength and need; the latter is the limitation, the constraint, and the division which comes from the outer relationships to which life is subject. It was this opposition of the absolute and the relative that Rousseau meant by the opposition of nature and civilization.

In Rousseau's life we found the very same opposition. He was thrown out of all relationships of family, vocation, church affiliation, state; from inner and outer causes was driven into becoming nature's free son who lived in his own inner world. Or, rather, he was thrown back and forth between the two forms of existence. In his character and endowments may be seen an analogy to this in the contrast between enthusiasm, the impulses, the fresh starts, shocks of thought, the ecstasies, on the one side; and the unified striving, the work, the often so little successful effort to effect a bridge between the various impulses and ideas, on the other.

If we should ask ourselves what Rousseau really means by nature we should find that he arrived at this concept by three paths; and that these paths constantly crossed each other for him, so that he was not aware of using the word nature in three different senses. The fact is, his conception of nature is partly of theological, partly of natural-historical, and partly of psychological, origin. In the introduction to the *Discours sur l'in-*

égalité there is particular opportunity to study the crossing of these three meanings.

The theological conception of nature is paramount when the simplicity and harmony which Rousseau is preaching are called the direct work of God in contrast to the bungling that men have effected through their many artifices. Thus, when he complains over one's no longer finding in man "that divine and majestic simplicity which his Creator had imprinted on him";[1] or when he (in the opening of *Émile*) says all is good as it issues from the hand of the Creator of nature; or when he conceives of the divine will in contrast to the craft of man.

The natural-historical conception of nature reveals itself in the detailed description of "the primitive state" in the *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité.* Rousseau intends here to discredit supernatural endowments and artificial improvement. The natural-historical has in common with the theological state of nature this, that it lies far back beyond all civilization. In other respects they are quite different. In the zoölogical state of nature there is indeed simplicity, but hardly any "majestic simplicity." The primitive man leads a life of pure instinct; reflection and imagination are not awake and the needs he becomes conscious of are few but wholly physical. Strangely enough, Rousseau did not realize that he could not well appeal in one and the same breath to theology and to zoölogy. They determined quite differently the point of departure for the exposition. The coalescence of the two conceptions most likely arose through Rousseau's seeing a calamity and a sin in the cessation of the life of instinct;—it was a sort of fall of man, as the end of the state of paradise is for the theological conception.

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[1] Preface to the *Discours sur l'inégalité.*

Rousseau attains to the psychological conception of nature through self-analysis. He abandons revelation and natural history and concentrates on the study of what goes on in the human soul, by this approach to discover the fundamental powers and tendencies of man's being. He is not here concerned, of course, with a vanished state; what he can thus find is—he sees clearly himself—a psychological hypothesis, "one better suited to throw light upon the nature of things [*la nature des choses*] than to reveal the true origin [*la véritable origine*]." The fundamental tendencies in man's being show themselves more or less clearly at all periods. By calling a state in which these fundamental tendencies attain full development the state of nature, he means, "a state that perhaps never has existed and probably never will exist, but of which one must have just notions in order to judge aright of our present state."[1]

The psychological interpretation was, in other words, to be used in constructing a criterion. When he says that man is good from nature he must mean that the fundamental tendencies of man's being are good—that the kernel is sound, or, as he puts it, that man is good though men are bad. He wished to teach men to turn back to their own hearts, to withdraw within themselves

[1] Preface to the *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité*. Later he complained that people refused to understand that for him the state of nature was not a real state but a hypothesis. (*Correspondance de Rousseau avec Usteri*, p. 165.) But this was his own fault.

instead of losing themselves in outer relationships, and in the inner self find the source of all goodness and all happiness. It is in this sense of the word that he calls himself the painter and champion of nature. And he believed that his lonely and detached life enabled him to find true nature, the fundamental traits erased or twisted by the artificial outer relations ("rapports artificiels") that civilization and society bring with them. Goodness everywhere consists in the full expression of the nature of any thing; and in his solitary moments he was himself, he felt—*sans* diversion, *sans* obstacle—and that he was truly what nature had intended.[1]

That Rousseau should allow these three meanings of the word to overlap has, naturally, wrought much confusion. One must recall that not until Kant was a just insight attained into the distinction between a point-of-view or central idea, and a dogmatically assumed reality. Of the three meanings Rousseau abides by the last; it corresponds to his method and is in accord with his personality. For he was a subjective psychologist, but no theologian or zoölogist.

The fundamental urge of man he finds to be that of self-preservation and self-assertion, a striving to live himself out fully with all his possibilities. This need of self-assertion or love of self he calls "amour de soi," love of one's own being. It is the antithesis of selfishness, "amour propre," a derived emotion originating with society, since it presupposes a conscious relation to others and a comparison of one's self with others. It expresses itself in desiring privileges over others, demanding their respect and seeking advantages at their expense. In the "state of nature," where man has to do (or is conceived as having to do) only with himself, this feeling does not exist. Considering man in the state of nature, we eliminate all relationships; there exists no "moi relatif"; the human being's existence is a direct unfolding of his life without hedges or opposition. This contrast of "amour de soi" and "amour propre," corresponding precisely to that of nature and civilization, is expounded, in much the same spirit, first in *Discours sur l'inégalité*, then in *Émile*, in *Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques*, and in *Rêveries*.

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[1] *Rêveries,* II. *Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques,* I and III. The first of the letters, *Sur la vertu et le bonheur,* published by Streckeisen-Moultou.

Peculiar to the "amour de soi" is the superabundant power. It spreads itself unconsciously over other objects than ourselves provided they be vitally like us. Therefore, sympathy is only a peculiar form of "amour de soi." Rousseau explains sympathy on the one hand from the fact that with the sense of equality between ourselves and others we fail to notice the differences, and on the other hand from the overflowing energy not called into use for our own self-preservation. Goodness is a necessary effect of a force that has no bounds. It can embrace everything and everybody. The moral rule that I shall act toward others as I wish them to act toward me Rousseau explains through my need to expand and my fulness of power, which make me one with beings of a nature like my own: "La force d'une âme expansive m'identifie avec mon semblable." Love for man is thus a consequence of "amour de soi": this is what we mean when we say that it is natural. To be dictated by nature means to be a consequence of "amour de soi."[1] The love of the good and the hatred of evil—in other words, conscience—is therefore just as natural as the love of self. The religious emotion, too, develops as an extension of "amour de soi": its being is gratitude, admiration, and reverence for the source of the goodness that we experience. Again, the states that played so important a rôle in Rousseau's life, the states of dreaming and imagination, are expressions of the urge for self-preservation; indeed, it is only in them that we feel ourselves wholly self-directed, free, and harmonious—as if we ourselves were gods:—"On se suffit à soi-même comme Dieu!" Selfishness, "amour-propre," hinders complete resignation, which alone can bring the soul peace. He who renounces all comparison and all dependence on others' opinions, and works himself free from the outer relationships that continually beget selfishness, returns to the order of nature: "amour-propre" becomes then again "amour de soi"![1]

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[1] The transformation of "amour de soi" into sympathy and love of mankind is given in "The Confession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar," *Émile,* IV. In an earlier section of *Émile* (also in IV but before the Vicar speaks) sympathy is called "the first relative emotion," because it presupposes consciousness of other beings and their inner state. But Rousseau draws the line sharply between this relation of equality and the other relations in which there obtains a difference in interests; and he feels that the transition in the former occurs so directly and so spontaneously that he naturally neglects the importance of that relation for the origin of sympathy. Somewhere in the first book of *Émile* he calls the "amour de soi" "amour-propre relativement à nous," since "amour de soi" presupposes in a certain sense a relationship, namely, one to ourselves. In the *Discours sur l'inégalité,* Rousseau conceives of the desire for self-preservation and sympathy as two different but originally coöperating tendencies.

Whenever the external relations to others (excepting the relation of equality) enter into consideration,—of necessity in social life—"amour-propre" arises in its various forms: cupidity, imperiousness, revengefulness, vanity, envy. These all presuppose comparison with others. Here belongs, too, dissatisfaction. Our love of self, "amour de soi" is contented when our real needs are satisfied, but selfishness is never contented and can never be, since it not only prefers ourselves to others but also demands that others should prefer us to themselves, something which is impossible. What makes man a good being is having few needs and not inviting comparisons between himself and others; what makes a man bad is having many needs, and laying much store by others' opinions. And through that whereby we are good or bad, through that also shall we be free or dependent. True freedom consists in the partnership of our powers and our needs. We become unfree when our needs surpass our powers so that we cannot do what we would. Then we become dependent on others and live in illusion and blindness.[2]

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[1] *Émile,* IV. *Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques,* III. *Rêveries,* II, V, VII, VIII.

[2] *Émile,* II and IV. The distinction between "amour de soi" and "amour-propre" is to be found expressed in the same terms by Vauvenargues in his *Introduction à la connaissance de l'esprit* (1746), Book I, chap. xxiv. Vauvenargues goes so far as to maintain that sympathy is a spontaneous feeling not to be explained by a "retour sur nous-mêmes" (chap. xxxviii). It is probable that Rousseau knew Vauvenargues's work when he wrote *Discours sur l'inégalité,* and later on developed the theory independently. Vauvenargues refers to

The transition from the absolute self-contained existence to the relative, the unfree—from nature to civilization—from "amour de soi" to "amour-propre," occurs, according to Rousseau, through a kind of fall of man. It is in part a psychological process, in part a social process which precipitates this fall and constantly prevents the creation of a harmonious existence.

Psychologically it is the imagination that has wrought this misfortune. It presents new possibilities to the consciousness and thus disturbs the balance. It arouses an excitation that surpasses the power at our disposal. Need and capacity no longer keep step. Our actual world is ever limited, but once the imagination is alive it can extend beyond all bounds. And it is our misfortune that we ever yearn for what is beyond ourselves. With this extension of the vision come comparison, reflection. The confident reliance upon our own unfolding is dissolved by the effort to attain ends the worth of which is based on a comparison with what others attain.[1]

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earlier philosophers; perhaps he had in mind Shaftesbury or the Cartesians. (In Port-Royal's logic [*l'Art de penser*], I, 8), a book which Rousseau studied, a contrast is established between that happiness which man can find in solitude through delving into the inner world, and that which is to be sought in honor and the admiration of others. Among the Renaissance philosophers one will also find the attempt to assign as basis the need for self-assertion; thus Telesio, Bruno, Campanella, and even Descartes and Spinoza. The ideas of Campanella, especially, resemble those of Rousseau. The distinction between "amour de soi" and "amour-propre," and the attempt to derive the love for others from self-assertiveness is to be found as far back as the Stoics, in particular Epictetus. Aristotle himself knew the distinction (*Eth. Nic.*, IX, 8; *Politics*, II, 5).

[1] In one passage (*Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques,* I) another kind of transition from "amour de soi" to "amour-propre" is explained through the fact that the obstacles to be overcome finally play a more important part than the goal aimed at.

Concerning the power of comparison, Rousseau's conception offers a characteristic instance of the way the varying tendencies in him led him into contradictions. In his description of the "state of nature," the power to compare is as the serpent in the Garden of Eden. He goes even so far as to praise the "natural man" because he does not think: "If nature has destined us to be healthy," he writes, "I should almost venture to assert that the state of reflection is a state opposed to nature, and that the man who thinks is a depraved animal."[1] But in *Émile*, where he is eagerly fighting materialism, this power of comparison serves as an argument. In a criticism of Helvetius' *l'Esprit*, Rousseau distinguishes sharply between perceiving, that is, conceiving objects, and judging,—that is, conceiving relationships. He distinguishes in the same manner between the passively received sensory images, "an absolute painting of a sensible object" and a concept (une idée), "a conception of the object determined through its relation to other objects."[2] Ideas are therefore formed through comparison and presuppose an activity which Rousseau calls *attention, méditation, raison,* or *réflexion,* whereby sensory images are collected, compared, and classified. The sensory intelligence, "raison sensitive," forms conceptions out of sensations; the reasoning intelligence, "raison intellectuelle," forms combined concepts of single notions. Whereas the mere sensation, according to Rousseau, can be explained by the influence of matter, the power of comparison must imply a purely intellectual substance; and on this basis he justifies his

[1] *Discours sur l'inégalité.*

[2] *Émile,* II and IV.

approval of the Cartesian doctrine of the soul and body as two different substances. Here his spiritualism falls into conflict with his enthusiasm for the primitive and elemental. The contradiction really lies deeper: for that which lent such great worth to the life of nature in Rousseau's eyes was the undisturbed flight of imagination, and reflection, favored by solitude in nature. But Rousseau was in these moments of greatest surrender to nature, then, a "depraved animal."

This contradiction is significant, too, in the psychology of the emotions. Here Rousseau's influence has been conclusive. Though he had as predecessors Spinoza, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Hume, we owe to him the recognition of feeling as an independent and peculiar aspect of intellectual life. He stresses the fact that the feeling of liking and not liking is developed before our reason. Feeling is, therefore, more natural than reason. It is, in addition, what assigns us our real worth: we are little through our intelligence, but great through our feelings! Feeling is in its simple form as a sense of life independent of the growth of the reason, and this very direct sense was for Rousseau all-important, as we have seen. Feeling alters more slowly than concepts and opinions, though in time these react upon it. A feeling can be dislodged directly only by another feeling: "On n'a de prise sur les passions que par les passions!"—a most important sentence in Rousseau's theory of education. What is more, the independence of feeling from reason is shown in its rising on occasion to ecstasy, where no specific conceptions are formed, where there is neither need nor capacity for thought, where our whole being, so to speak, overflows into the infinite.

In such assertions and descriptions as these[1] Rousseau shifted the center of gravity of our intellectual being from the "reason,"—where (especially under the influence of Plato and Platonism, as well as the reflected glory of the new science) for so long a time they were wont to find it—to the feelings. It is not quite clear that he altogether ignores the influence of the understanding in the growth of the emotional self. But therein his praise of the "state of nature," if by this is meant a primitive state, stands in contradiction with his later, more fully constructed, conception. It is his freedom from care that he admires in the "wild man." Yet, what Rousseau sought in nature lay far beyond any horizon that might present itself to the savage "whose imagination paints nothing for him, and whose heart demands nothing." The treatise on the origin of Inequality contradicts in this, as in several other matters, his later works, and these not only present a fuller study of it but also a direct correction of it.

The feelings, according to Rousseau, originate in need, and the stress he lays on the feelings naturally involves an emphasis on instinct, involuntary impulsion in a certain direction, which the philosophy of the Enlightenment was inclined to underestimate. Rousseau is not thinking alone of primitive instincts. Not only is "amour de soi" an instinct, but also conscience and genius are instincts and in definite antithesis to reason.

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[1] *Émile, Rêveries,* V and VII, and the *Lettres sur la vertu et le bonheur,* published by Streckeisen-Moultou.

Rousseau maintains, then, that imagination and reflection break the peace and harmony of life, set need and capacity at odds, rob us of our sense of safety, and weaken our strength. The enlightenment of reason displaces direct perception, feeling, instinct, and genius; and the possibilities of the imagination take from us our firm grasp on life.

The psychological process cannot be distinguished from the social. If, on the one hand, it is the imagination and its new possibilities that are fatal, so that man no longer lives with all his power, on the other hand, socially, it is the division of labor that destroys the unity of life for each individual. Artisans and artists could only originate through specialization. And with specialization follows the need of exchange. The individual can no longer produce enough for his needs and must gain by exchange with others. No longer an entity, he becomes a fragment, enjoying unity only together with others. He develops one-sidedly, and becomes dependent on others. The possibility of being himself fully, to follow his own nature in its full range, disappears.[1] Whereupon there arises not only a breach between the various private occupations themselves, but between these and the public, a most regrettable divorce. We read:

> What makes for human misery is the contradiction one finds between our condition and our desires, between our duties and our inclinations, between nature and social

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[1] *Émile,* I and III.

institutions, between man and the citizen. Make man whole and you make him as happy as he can be.[1]

Both psychologically and in a social way, according to Rousseau, a dissolution and an undermining of man's nature has taken place. In his more emphatic passages he seems (like Mandeville in his fable of the bee, though in an opposite direction) to offer the choice of "Nature" or "Civilization." So that, in the *Discours sur l'inégalité*, on declaring perfectability, progress, as the source of all misfortune, the very air must turn bad with so many people living together. Still, as we noted before, he came out at once with reservations. He would not retract, but only conceded the significance of civilization as a means for preventing things still worse. Only, he required that civilization should not be developed hastily. Later on, in his main works, he attained the conception of an *inner, natural development*, of a good civilization (développement interne, naturel, d'une bonne culture). Nature can become active both in "the state of civilization" and the "state of nature." We read:

> Once we have become dependent upon everything [by the division of labor], everything concerns us, and our curiosity of necessity expands with our needs. . . . You may object that I have issued from nature; I believe nothing of the sort. She chooses her instruments and regulates them, not according to opinion, but according to need. But the needs change according to the circumstances of man. There is a considerable difference between the

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[1] *Fragments des institutions politiques*, Streckeisen-Moultou, p. 224.

natural man living in a state of nature, and the natural man living in a state of society.[1]

And a distinction is made between "what is natural in the savage state and what is natural in the social" (ce qui est naturel à l'état naturel et ce qui est naturel à l'état civil).[2] Rousseau has here arrived at a clear insight already enjoyed by Shaftesbury, of the relativity of the conception of nature no less than of civilization. When any civilization meets the given conditions of life it effects an unfolding of the latent possibilities without undermining the power of life, and then it is natural. Asserting that true civilization must correspond to the actual stage attained, and so drawing the conclusion that there can be no absolute universal civilization (for instance, no universal art or universally applicable constitution or system of education), he had virtually conceded that there is no universally true "nature." No longer could he appeal to "nature" in general. We can readily understand that for him the hardest of all was to acknowledge this conclusion.

This removes the conflict between the absolute and the relative (that which has significance by virtue of being related to something); and, had his thinking not been interrupted at this point, the dualistic basis of Rousseau's thought might have given way to another principle, one not unlike the modern doctrine of evolution. Rousseau's attachment to a passive, dreamy state, the idyllic, and his lack of faith in conscious human interference made him wish to see the evolution proceed

[1] *Émile,* III.

[2] *Ibid.,* V.

by short steps. "Good civilization" was for him retardation, that the unconscious unfolding of the powers might attain its highest possible significance.

Having shown us how readily the progress of civilization spells division, disharmony, and dependence, Rousseau, who had begun as evidently a hater of civilization, had provided thereby a criterion for distinguishing between true and false civilization—and had in doing that done the greatest service conceivable.

But Rousseau brings us to another solution of the conflict between the absolute form of existence and the life of external relations. Not alone through successive stages, but in direct strife with conditions, limitations, and opposition, can the self be preserved. A higher form of ethical character begins to develop as soon as we raise ourselves above whatever draws us outward and down. On calling the immediate assertion of self and self-development ("amour de soi") good, Rousseau did not mean that the highest worth of the personality was realized in it. He distinguishes between *bonté*, that spontaneous unfolding of self, and *vertu*, the elevation of the self through strife. "Virtue," he wrote, "is a state of war; he who seeks to possess it must constantly struggle with himself."[1] And—"There is no happiness without courage, no virtue without struggle. The word virtue means strength. Virtue can be found only in a being whose nature is weak but whose will is strong."[2]

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[1] *La Nouvelle Héloïse,* VI, 13.

[2] *Émile,* IV. Rousseau recognizes the fact that he does not possess virtue himself. On the other hand he refers to Fénelon, Catinat, and Lord Keith as examples of virtue. (*Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques,* II.)

In a letter of a later period (To ——, January 15, 1769), he wrote:

> To do good is the sweetest labor of a well-bred man; his uprightness, his generosity, are not the work of his principles, but of his goodness of nature; he follows his own promptings in exercising justice, as the evil one follows his in practising malice. To satisfy the desire that prompts us to do good is goodness but not virtue. This word virtue means strength ["force"].[1] There can be no virtue without struggle; none without victory. Virtue consists not only in being just, but in being so only by conquering one's passions, in ruling one's own heart.

In *Lettres sur la vertu et le bonheur*[2] he develops the idea that the conditions of civilization and society are to blame for the insufficiency of natural goodness (bonté absolue); by removing our solitude and involving us in a series of outer relationships and limitations, by making us parts of a large whole, they impose demands of which the "state of nature" knew nothing. Our dependence on society provides us with duties toward it. Duty and virtue were thus to Rousseau social conceptions. This is why in his *Économie politique* he propounds the idea that virtue consists of an agreement of the individual will with the common will, which is ever seeking the preservation and the welfare of the whole and all its parts. Man must adopt a higher, more universal standpoint than his own private one, adjust his individuality to a broader scheme of things—and this itself can come about only through struggle. The demoralizing division of labor between private and public cannot be abandoned without every individual's energetic efforts, and his conquest of himself.[1]

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[1] Translators' note: The author calls attention here to the relation between the Danish word *dyd* (virtue, or doughtiness—to cite a cognate English form) and the Danish verb *due* (to be worth, or to do—in the cognate English form). The Danish word originally meant strength, or capacity.

[2] Streckeisen-Moultou, pp. 135 ff.

Not alone a new conception of civilization issues from Rousseau's exposition of the problem which his main ideas led him to state, but also a new ethical system.

2. THE RELIGIOUS PROBLEM

We have already indicated how Rousseau came to shift the center of gravity of the religious problem from the objective to the subjective, from an outlook on the world to the demands of the personal life. In doing this he opened the way for a freer and more unbiased experience of the true significance of religion than had been possible before. We have also seen that the religious emotion, according to Rousseau, developed from the need of asserting and preserving one's being ("amour de soi"). At its height this need attains a superabundance for which there is no room in the finite world. An infinite urge is astir; one seems to be about to smother in the world: "J'étouffe dans l'univers!"[1] All distinctions and barriers disappear. One feels his unity with all of nature in all that lives.[2]

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[1] There can hardly be a question but that this definition of "vertu" as distinguished from "bonté naturelle," partly as a struggle for conquest of self, partly as an adjustment of the individual will to the universal, had a great influence on the development of Kant's ethics in the final form it assumed in his chief works. Here is a factor that must be added to the explanation that I attempted to give of the evolution of Kant's ethics in my treatise *Om Kontinuiteten i Kants philosofiske Udviklingsgang* (Vidensk. Selsk's Skr. 6. Raekke.) pp. 43–46. (Also see Höffding, *History of Modern Philosophy,* II, 91–93.) In order to understand fully Kant's statement of his ethics which appeared in an article four years after his *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft,* one must take into account the influence on his ethics of his historical conception developed in those intervening years. And I am convinced from a renewed examination of Rousseau's philosophy that precisely here Rousseau's ideas acted upon Kant in his transition toward a definition of his ethics. Two occasions on which Kant was influenced by Rousseau significantly can be ascertained, the first about 1762 with the publication of *Émile,* the second about 1783, when not only the "Confession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar," but especially Rousseau's conception of society, and the distinction between "bonté" and "vertu" made an impression on him. (See my treatise, *Rousseaus Indflydelse paa den definitive Form for Kants Etik;* also *Kantstudien,* 1898.)

Only when out in open nature could this feeling stir in Rousseau. In extreme joy and wonder at life his thoughts roamed from object to object until at last they joined the great all, eternity, by which he felt himself surrounded. Every conception, every idea, proved insufficient, and only an explosion of feeling could relieve the emotional state. Rousseau's religious emotion at its height was silent wonder. He tells of an old woman[3] whom a bishop met on his rounds, whose whole prayer consisted of "Oh!" The bishop said, "Good mother, keep on praying that way; your prayer is worth more than ours." "And, so," Rousseau adds, "this is my way of praying."

> I can understand [he remarks in this connection], that city folk who see only walls, streets, and crimes should have little faith; but I cannot understand why country people, especially the more solitary, should not have any.

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[1] *Lettres à Malesherbes*, III.
[2] *Rêveries*, VII.
[3] *Confessions*, XII.

Why do their souls not rise a hundred times a day in ecstasy to the Author of all the wonders about them?

Thus Rousseau's religious nature is related to his feeling for nature and his fight for religion is a part of the fight he wages for life in the country, against life in the city. In a fragment he writes that the thought of God must have originated for the first man on a beautiful summer evening after sunset.

Julie's religion in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* is of a much more ardent and mystical character than the emotion he describes when speaking of himself. It springs from a need to love, which nothing earthly or limited can satisfy. This trait is best seen in the letter which Rousseau calls Julie's swan song:

"My devotion to all that is dear to me alone cannot absorb me; there is left an unused energy which I do not know how to use. . . . Finding nothing on earth that fills it, my eager spirit seeks elsewhere to be filled: by raising itself to the source of feeling and of being, here it loses its dryness and its apathy, here it is reborn, here it is rejuvenated, here it draws a new life."[1] . . . It is her inexhaustible heart [cœur intarissable], as was said of her, that leads her to the religious enthusiasm through which she learns that only an infinite object can fill the human heart.[2]

For Rousseau, religion is an expression of inner feeling and power, an exclamation of joy and gratitude for life and nature; the religious urge is an aspiration some day to breathe fully and freely—as one cannot do while conscious of the presence of finite objects. In the religious state, material considerations cease to exist.

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[1] VI, 8.

[2] V, 5.

Rousseau's description of the religious state as the highest development of man's sincere, strong desire for life and self-surrender[1] has elements in common with the religious life of all times. He is influenced most of all by the Cartesian mystics, and writes of being for a time in his youth "pious, almost in Fénelon's way." His description reminds one of the ideas of Campanella, Spinoza, and Joseph Butler, though there is no likely influence from them. Related ideas appear in Schleiermacher's *Reden über die Religion*, and in Faust's confession of faith. Toward the close of his life Goethe gave expression to a similar spirit[2] which was for Rousseau the supreme religion:

> In unsers Busens Reine wogt ein Streben
> Sich einem Höhern, Reinern, Unbekannten
> Aus Dankbarkeit freiwillig hinzugeben,
> Enträthselnd sich den ewig Ungenannten;
> Wir heissen's: fromm sein![3]

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[1] It must, however, be noted that besides the religious emotion itself leading to an inner relation to God and flowing directly over into the Infinite Being, Rousseau expresses his religion in still another form, in his discussion of immortality. There the essential thing is not that God is, but that God guarantees a life after death with reward and punishment (though not eternal punishment). This side of Rousseau's religion is seen best in his letters. It explains his inability to conceive morality without religion (Letter to Vernes, February 18, 1758; to Offreville, October 4, 1761; *Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques*, III). The significance of outer guaranties thus accruing to religion does not seem consistent with the feeling of unity which Rousseau describes when he writes with enthusiasm. Apparently two different religious points of view exist side by side in him.

[2] "Marienbader Elegien."

[3] In the purity of our bosom there dwells a desire to surrender

At its height the religious emotion is the antithesis of the understanding, since no conception or visualization can express its object.

> How [Julie asks] can I see or imagine the greatness of the Infinite Being! Whenever I would raise myself to Him I know not where I am; perceiving no connection between myself and Him, I know not where to reach Him, I neither feel nor see anything, I am as if annihilated. . . . But why should I need to think or imagine, when all my faculties are suspended.

And the Savoyard Vicar expresses himself in the same manner:

> I behold God everywhere in his works; I feel Him within me, I see Him all around me; but as soon as I wish to contemplate Him in Himself, as soon as I would seek Him out, find out what He is, find His substance, He escapes me and my troubled spirit perceives nothing more. . . . The worthiest use of the reason is to efface one's self before God; my spirit is entranced, my weakness charms me when I feel myself overpowered by His greatness.

Through the feelings then, not by the help of reason, Rousseau reaches his religion.

> I have passed my life among the most unbelieving [he writes, in a letter to Vernes, February 18, 1758], without letting them disturb me, loving them, respecting them, without being able to endure their doctrine. I always told them that I was without means of opposing them, but that I did not wish to believe them; philosophy having on this

one's self eagerly in gratitude to a higher, a purer, an unknown Being, solving for one's self the puzzle of the eternally Nameless One; we call it: *being pious!*

> score neither riverbed nor banks, wanting in the fundamental ideas and elementary principles, is but a sea of uncertainties and doubts, from which the metaphysician never extricates himself. There, then, I abandoned reason and consulted nature, that is, the inner sense which directs my belief independently of my reason.

Still, Rousseau's religion does not conflict with his reason; on the contrary, he believes that the proper use of the reason in contemplating the world will lead one to recognize the truths of natural religion.

Materialism is an absurdity in his eyes, since matter in itself is latent, scattered, and without consciousness. Whence, he asks, come motion, continuity, and the life of the soul, in the world? This question can be answered only by recourse to the immediate experience of our will moving our body, according to Rousseau. Here is the key to the understanding of the world! Only a will can be a cause. No effect without will!

Thus Rousseau conceives of the cause of movement, of continuity, of spiritual life as analogous to human personality. His nature philosophy is a consistent animism, or personalism. He ignores the principle of the natural sciences that every phenomenon of nature in our experience is to be explained by another phenomenon of nature as a transformation or continuation of it. He found in his own will the key that opens everywhere. Any consistent natural conception is in this way made impossible; but there was no question of one with Rousseau. He must be allowed to proceed in his thought consistently from the hypothesis he assumes.

He finds two substances, the material and the spiritual. The necessity of assuming the soul to be a being different from the body lies for him in the capacity to compare and judge. Sensation is a purely passive process, due to the influence of the body, but comparison and judgment are purely incorporeal processes and testify to an active principle in man. In the other aspects of consciousness this antithesis appears again: as sensation arises from the body but thought from the soul, so the passions arise from the body but the conscience and the will come from the soul.

Rousseau is here re-interpreting Platonic and Cartesian spiritualism. His psychology confirms his natural philosophy. And he does not, like so many spiritualists, forget in his theology what both of these have taught him. Since matter can neither assume motion of itself, nor arrange itself, nor acquire soul, of itself, everything in existence cannot be traced back to one principle. One must accept both an originally passive and an originally active principle, for the active principle cannot itself produce that which it is to act upon. The spiritual can as little produce the material as can the material the spiritual. The consequence is an eternal coexistence of two principles, of God and matter.

At this point one can, as already indicated, prove an increasing certainty in Rousseau's conviction. In the letter to Voltaire (1756) it is hinted at. In *Émile*[1] it is dwelt upon more at length, though the question is left open. When the Archbishop of Paris drew from his doctrines the consequence that he assumed two Gods, he wrote at length on this matter in his *Lettre à M. de*

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[1] IV.

Beaumont, stressing the fact that to accept two principles is not the same as accepting two Gods, unless one assumed, like the Manicheans, two active principles; but in the "Confession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar" he has definitely in mind an active and a passive principle.

Let us suppose, he says, that there is a single eternal principle for everything. This principle, simple in its nature, cannot consist of matter and spirit but must be either spirit or matter alone. For the reasons which the Vicar has cited, this principle cannot be matter; and if it is spirit, matter cannot derive its existence from it, for that would be a creation and the notion of creation, the notion that nothing should become something through a simple act of will, is of all notions not absolutely self-contradictory the least conceivable to the human mind. He repeats that it is not necessary for the religious feeling that the origin of things be explained. Finally, he maintains that the word "create" in the first line of Genesis is a misleading translation of the Hebrew word, meaning "bring forth from nothing." In the letter to L——, 1769, he speaks with full conviction and one can see from this letter (as from *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and *Émile*) what drives the problem home for him is the problem of evil. He cannot explain the world as it is with all the physical and moral evil it contains through an omnipotent and benignant being; and, as he already hinted in the letter to Voltaire, he would rather renounce omnipotence than goodness. Evil is then to be explained by the resistance matter makes to movement, to order, and to the process of spiritualization, from the way in which it prevents the spiritual activity from attaining full development.

In the importance of the problem of evil for Rousseau and in the solution he offers, one may note the influence of a zealous study of Bayle. His point of view reminds one, as he himself says, of Plato's (especially in the *Timaeus*). Voltaire, John Stuart Mill, and William James arrived at a similar point of view in this old problem. The conception of life as a struggle, as an evolution in which there is always opposition to overcome, but hope of progress, finds a natural justification in this doctrine, though this, too, has its theoretic difficulties, which we shall not discuss here.

Despite the fact that Rousseau intended thus to prove that the right use of the reason leads to a strengthening of the postulates of religious emotion, on closer investigation we find a decided difference between the results he attains through surrender to his religious feeling and through following the path of reason. Feeling at its height makes its object the one and all, the endless in which all limitations disappear,—but reason leads him to a dualism of God and matter. How may God be taken as the Infinite Being, when matter is outside of Him? Besides, the needs of the heart lead him to declare all the ideas and concepts as insufficient to express divinity. But in his philosophy of nature he found the explanation for the individual and the whole in the personal will, and has here a conception that should express divinity. The Archbishop of Paris (or the theologian who wrote his pastoral letter) lost no time in pointing out the inconsistency in this. Rousseau could escape from it only by stressing the fact that he could form conceptions of the divine being solely through analogies. The question remains, however, whether the analogy does not become so remote that only the word remains. The Savoyard Vicar says: "God and my soul do not have the same nature. . . . The divine attributes I assume without comprehending them, and at bottom that is not to think at all." And Julie regards it as a great humiliation, as a transition to a "vulgar denomination" ("culte grossier"), when she passes from her ecstatic moments over to the common dualistic conception "which places sensual objects between God and man."

This contradiction in Rousseau throws light on his religious point of view. Despite his central stress on religion as a matter of feeling, he did not abandon the old assumption that religion, besides expressing our practical need of values for existence, at the same time offers a theoretic explanation for existence. The moment religion attempts the latter it clashes inevitably with science; and that to avoid such a clash as this Rousseau should fall back upon animism, the philosophy of primitive man, is therefore quite natural.—Still, in this inconsistency we find an element more or less characteristic of all religion and one containing the virtual germ of the religious problem. The religious urge follows two directions. On the one hand it seeks surrender to, and rest in, an ideal and infinite object, seeks to feel at one with that which is all in all. On the other hand it seeks an example and a fellow-combatant in the battle of life, an example and a fellow-combatant who himself has been tested in strife and has opposition to conquer. According to the first tendency religion makes its object infinite, and according to the second it makes it finite. In every religious conception, perhaps in every view of life, at this point a contradiction, a paradox, appears.

In conceiving of the "natural religion," the acceptance of a personal God and of personal immortality as direct outcomes of the emotional demand, he overlooks the fact that this religion, too, has its history and its tradition, extending from the Greek philosophers through the Renaissance to English Deism. That Rousseau should so readily connect these conceptions with his religious feeling came obviously from their being in the air. This is also the reason why he is inclined to hold them too dogmatically. He was convinced that they expressed the essential in all higher religions, and in the letter to the Archbishop of Paris he declared that in a gathering of Christians, Jews, and Mohammedans one could come to agreement on the truths of the natural religion—provided one excluded in advance from the meeting the theologians of all concerned!

In drawing his distinction between natural and positive religion, Rousseau—like Voltaire—was quite different from Diderot and d'Holbach, who kept them both on the same shelf. For Rousseau, natural religion was the immediate expression of the feelings, especially of the need for expansion and surrender. But positive religion places authorities and books between man and God. All positive religion is based on revelation which comes to the individual through tradition, and especially through books. "Toujours des livres!" exclaims the Vicar. I wonder if God requires that we be so learned? Close all books and go out into the freedom of nature! The Gospel is greater than all other books but it is still only a book. Besides, positive religion by its "vulgar worship" debases the sublime relation to God, into which the "worship of the heart" brings man. And by its dogmatic assertions it makes men conceited and belligerent. Finally, demanding that we shall keep our reason captive it scoffs at God who gave us our reason; and it is also self-contradictory: revelation should, indeed, explain the obscurities of the natural religion but instead it leads us into still more awful mysteries! What shall we think of a remedy that brings no cure?

Still, Rousseau would not take a practical stand against the positive religion. He believed that the worship of the heart is possible in the higher national religions. He clung especially to the Gospel, which for him had no peer. He demanded, however, utter freedom of interpretation, and this he felt was something that Protestantism must necessarily, according to its principles, grant. On what will Protestantism found its authority when it itself has broken with all tradition? Only on the sacredness, the depth, the beauty, and the efficacy of Christianity can the conviction of its truth be built. Especially in the *Lettres de la montagne* Rousseau dwells on this point. Here he criticizes the belief in miracles even more violently and thoroughly than in the confessions of the Vicar. Accounts of miracles can be believed only on authority, and this runs counter to the Protestant principle. It is self-contradictory, first to prove God's existence from the orderly principle of nature, and then to suppose actual breach of this order. And to convince one's self of a miracle in any specific case one should really know all the laws of nature and be able to show that none of them explains what has happened.

Rousseau believed in Christianity, despite miracles, which he dismisses as inexplicable. To satisfy his need for the worship of the heart in association with others he took part in the Sacrament at Neufchâtel; and in accord with this he let his Vicar, despite all the man's secret heresies, read the mass with sincere reverence. He took the stand that it fell to the state to determine the outer form of worship to be followed within its realm. Yet he would have liked to assert (as is seen in the *Lettre à Voltaire* and in the *Contrat social*) that the doctrines of the natural religion should be the faith of all citizens, a most unfortunate attempt to found a "civil religion." On the other hand, he takes a most decided attitude against Christianity in the *Contrat social* and in the correspondence with Usteri, in so far as it is taken as a religion of the hereafter, that sets as man's only task the salvation of his soul in another life; for then it results in breaking up all family life and all national bonds; and in paralyzing the energy which the life of the state exacts of the individual. Conceived of in this way Christianity is a religion inimical to the state. It is the human elements of Christianity and the ideal supremacy of the figure of Christ that Rousseau finds permanent.

3. THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PROBLEM

Political bondage and social suffering as a necessary consequence of having abandoned the state of nature,—that was, according to the *Discours sur l'inégalité*, the actual situation. Here Rousseau had attained the culmination of his pessimistic conception. In the later works he attacks the problem more positively. As we have seen, he argues abstractly, but is most cautious in reference to the historical conditions. At any rate, he very nearly takes the idea of the state of nature and the original contract as a measure of the soundness of the development, not as expression of the historic facts. Still, by building on these ideas he forfeited in several ways the possibility of a sane grasp. He used these ideas partly, because since the Middle Ages they had been used in the so-called natural law; partly, because they seemed to afford the clarity and the perspicuity that he in common with his age prized so highly; and finally, because the abstract thinking implied an idealism that made the faults of the existing political and social conditions stand out in a strong light. He uses it especially to sharpen the antithesis between nature and society. From this point of view the *Contrat social* is a revolutionary work. But, however revolutionary Rousseau may be in his doctrines and ideals, he is just as cautious in their application to the specific—by virtue of the principle that the form of society and civilization must correspond to the actual conditions. Turgot, the only French statesman before the Revolution who seriously attempted reform in the spirit of the new ideas, was a great admirer of the *Contrat social*, particularly because of the inalienable sovereignty of the people. But he felt that Rousseau had not gone far enough, though he had ventured upon the only road that could lead man to greater equality, justice, and happiness.

The social contract need not necessarily be thought of as entered into in full consciousness, at least not by those made citizens after the first foundations were laid. Whoever settles within the realms of the state agrees tacitly to obey the laws (le consentement est dans la résidence); and, on the other hand, the government, when no protest is raised by the people against any plan, may rightly accept the general silence as agreement.[1] But all the same, the idea of a covenant between isolated individuals in a state of nature is altogether too mechanical a point of view; all the more so because Rousseau stresses the unity of the common will of the people. The wills of the individuals should melt into the common will; "volonté générale," as distinguished from "volonté de tous." But how does this common will develop? The idea of the contract offers no solution. This common will is altogether mystical, expressing as it does the innermost yearning of the whole nation, adjusting itself to their common interest, to whatever can further the welfare of a people as a whole and as individuals through the changing generations. It corresponds to "amour de soi" in the individual. It is sovereign. Dependence on it is for the individual no bondage, since his own will and interest are assimilated to it. By partaking of it, each individual is "membre du souverain," while by his obedience to its demands he is to be considered as subject. Despite all mysticism Rousseau's great service is his pointing back to the eternal source of the life of the nation, to the nation's own common need of self-preservation, at a time when the political life was petrified in outer obsolete forms. He thus explained to his age that however much dissolution one effected through obstinate conservatism or skeptical criticism, one neither should nor could do violence to the inner life itself.

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[1] *Contrat social,* II, 1; IV, 2.

Like earlier writers on natural law (especially Bodin and Althusius), he distinguished between the form of state and the form of government. There can be but one state form, for the sovereignty is and must ever be with the nation, which never dies, whereas forms of government may change. Whoever at any given time wields authority, depends upon the character, the stage of development, and external circumstances of the nation. The great lawgivers, like Lycurgus and Mohammed, are men who, with the foresight of genius, perceived what institutions would best preserve and develop the life of the nation. They are the organs of the national will. One might think that for Rousseau democracy would be the best form of government. But he regards democracy as an impossibility, since the whole nation cannot meet at once. An aristocracy is the best form of government; yet he naturally rejects the aristocracy if it is to mean that the sovereignty is with the few. The executive power must constantly seek certainty of its agreement with the common will, whose organ it shall be, through popular assemblies where all the citizens meet. Only by counting the votes of the popular assembly can the tendency of the popular will be discovered. The people in its position of sovereignty imposes laws upon itself in its position of subject. But the assembly of the people must not seize the executive power, which must always remain in the hands of the few.

Lest discord arise between the sovereign and the executive power, the state must not be too big. This is one of the most characteristic features of his politics, and Rousseau keeps turning to it again and again. There exists for him an inverse ratio between the freedom obtaining in a state and the size of the state. The bigger a state is, the stronger its government must be to hold it together, and the greater the temptations to misuse power. In a little state the whole will be kept together by the natural influence of customs and morals, and there will then be no great use for centralized power and compelling laws.[1] And not alone is freedom greatest in small states, but the sense of nationality will there be strongest, and this again is a source of the greatest virtues. In the national feeling, in fact, is stirred up that common will (volonté générale) which sustains the nation through the centuries.[2] All told, sympathy and humanity prosper most in limited societies. The family is like a little country, the only natural society and the oldest society.[3] It is the live common feeling that makes a society strong, and therefore small states will be relatively stronger than the large. In the treatise on the constitution of Poland, Rousseau says that the task would be to provide the constitution of a large realm with the firmness and force so easily acquired by the constitution of a little republic; and he finds in the size and extent of states the most important causes of the misfortunes of the human race. Poland will be stronger by being smaller, and perhaps its neighbors will do it the service of reducing its size: "It will, indeed, be a great misfortune for the parts split off, but it will be a benefit to the nation as a whole."[1]

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[1] *Vide* especially *ibid.*, III, 1.

[2] *Économie politique.*

[3] *Contrat social,* I, 2. *Émile,* V.

In his political theories Rousseau was thinking constantly of small states. Sparta, earlier Rome, and Geneva, were his models. There the whole nation can control the actions of the executive power, and representation is not necessary. Representation is in Rousseau's eyes a monstrosity: sovereignty can no more be represented than it can be disposed of. The people actually abdicates when it has elected representatives; and the English people is free only in the moment of election. In any event the representatives should change often and preferably be bound by definite instructions.[2] The question of the constitution of a large state is, according to Rousseau, at bottom insoluble. The only solution Rousseau can point to, combining freedom and size so that a state does not have to be limited—as he would have it—to a single city, is a confederation or union of several small states. He hinted at this solution in the discussion of the *Constitution of Poland*, and he came upon this particular thought in speculating how small states, to which he attributed so much worth, should survive alongside the large states. He intrusted a manuscript developing this thought more fully to one of his friends, who later—at the beginning of the Revolution—thought of publishing it, but was deterred, since "it might bring danger to his country."[1] The question was solved practically later, in the establishing of the American Federal Constitution. The problem whose solution not only Rousseau but also Frederick the Great doubted, was solved by the genius of Alexander Hamilton.[2]

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[1] *Gouvernement de Pologne,* chap. v.

[2] *Contrat social,* III, 15. *Gouvernement de Pologne,* chap. vi.

Rousseau not only prefers small states, he prefers states without division of labor, and without that wealth and luxury that accompany division of labor. The happiest state is for him that which lies between the indolence of the state of nature and the nervous bustle of modern civilization. Such a state, still to be found in a way in his own country, Switzerland, he regarded as mankind's true youth. In the *Discours sur l'inégalité* this happiest time is assigned to a much more primitive stage than the one which he describes as that of the Swiss nation, in the letter to the Marshal of Luxemburg of January 20, 1763. What concerned him particularly was that the excessive civilization of the big cities should not spread to the small, and that the cities should not keep on growing by the influx of country folk. In all his main writings he stresses the relation of country and city. He is very suspicious of the influx of country dwellers into the cities, for "it is the people of the country who make the nation."[1] He advises the Corsicans to have as few cities as possible and above all no capital. Agriculture and the handicrafts should be the most important means of subsistence. Organized industry and commerce he frowns upon. The state had rather seek to limit its needs than to increase its income, and the division of labor is to be restricted to the least possible, for it brings bondage. On this point Rousseau differs sharply with a number of contemporary philosophers and political economists (Condillac, La Mettrie, Helvetius, Hume, Adam Smith), who each in his way stressed the importance of increasing needs, since thus are created incentives for more varied and heightened activity.

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[1] Beaudoin, *La vie et les œuvres de J.-J. Rousseau,* II, pp. 33 ff. Montesquieu (*Esprit des lois,* IX, 1–3) had already suggested the thought of a league as necessary for the existence of small republics.

[2] Cf. Condorcet, *Vie de Turgot* (London, 1786), pp. 267 ff. John Fiske, *The Critical Period of American History* (London, 1888), p. 58. See my article "Alexander Hamilton and the American Federal Constitution," *Mindre Arbejder,* 1st ser.; see also Alexander Hamilton, *The Federalist,* No. IX, 1787.

Rousseau has often been regarded as the precursor of modern socialism. This is justified from the way in which he took up the question of civilization. He championed the many against the few, and he pointed out the shadowy sides of the division of labor so blindly admired by optimistic political economists. He it was who showed first clearly that there exists a social question. Yet he is not a socialist in the sense that he would have private property abolished as means to production. A statement in *Discours sur l'inégalité*, in which socialism has been found, really heads in the other direction.

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[1] *Émile*, V.

> The first [we read], who hedged in a plot of ground, who dared to say "this belongs to me," and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. How many crimes, wars, murders, how many misfortunes and terrors would mankind not have been spared had someone pulled up the stakes and filled in the ditches, and then called to his fellows: "Beware of listening to that impostor; you are lost if you forget that the fruits belong to all but the soil to none!"

But this very statement shows that Rousseau cannot conceive of society without private property. The ideal for him was a society of comfortably situated private owners and artisans. He is the prophet of the middle class, and the social question has for him not yet assumed the character of a labor question as it did in the nineteenth century. He anticipates this turn, nevertheless, by emphasizing the division of personality and the dependence which the division of labor brings with it. And he insisted strongly that it is the duty of the state to reduce the inequalities as much as possible, using a just distribution of taxes to bring this about.[1]

Rousseau has been regarded as the spiritual father of the French Revolution. But we have already shown in our analysis of the *Contrat social* that nothing could be further from Rousseau's spirit than the attempt in 1793 to construct a constitution from his book. He had too clear a sense for nature and reality to think such a thing possible. But still less was it in Rousseau's spirit to suspend the new constitution as soon as it was adopted and surrender the authority to a committee of public

[1] *Contrat social,* II, 11. *Économie politique.*

safety. Therewith the executive power took the place of sovereignty; Rousseau would have discovered in this a proof of the perniciousness of the representative system. As to the Reign of Terror, Rousseau needs no defense, though the responsibility has been laid on his unhappy head. Had he lived until the Reign of Terror he had surely become one of its victims. He himself had said in the *Économie politique*, that it was a sign that a government was pernicious when it was induced to allow the cry of terror to displace the voice of duty among its subjects.

On the other hand, Rousseau's doctrine of the sovereignty of the people, of the people's instinct of self-preservation that survives while governments and systems change, paved the way for the best in the Revolution,—faith in the future of the people and in its right. In so far as the Revolution represents a great explosion of enthusiasm, an expression of the hope that the evils of society can be reduced by mutual labor, its prophet is Rousseau. He aroused pride in being a citizen. He made "citoyen" a title of honor and provoked a renaissance of patriotic feeling. Despite his independence of all narrow connections he was the spokesman both of nationality and of the family; nothing lay more remote from him than abstract cosmopolitanism, however many states might lock their doors against him. If the French people were enthusiastic at the shout: "Allons, *enfants de la patrie!* Aux armes, *citoyens!*" it was the dreamer of Les Charmettes and Montmorency who made possible this cry and this enthusiasm. In this homeless dreamer who raised strong doubts concerning the rights of civilization and society to exist, the new political and national life found one of its most vital pioneers.

4. THE PEDAGOGICAL PROBLEM

An awakening interest in pedagogy can be traced in the last half of the eighteenth century in natural relation to that instinct for the new that began to show itself, and whose most important organ was Jean Jacques Rousseau. His interest in children and education goes together with his perception of new possibilities, of beginnings, of what is primitive. One might think that anyone preaching a return to nature would not lay great stress on education. But Rousseau's theory of education is first of all concerned with opening the way for direct and unconscious unfolding of the individual,—with assuring the right of the natural through thwarting outer hindrances and everything that might cause distortion. Education cannot create out of nothing, but can only procure conditions as good as possible for that which is innate in the child's original nature. Education is therefore chiefly negative, especially in early infancy. The negative, protective, and preventive part of education is for Rousseau the most important, as hygiene was for him the most important part of medicine. He explained once[1] how his theory of the "negativity" of education went together with his belief in the goodness of nature. It follows from this belief that the flaws actually in mankind must come from outer influences, which it must, therefore, be the most vital task of education to exclude.

[1] *Lettre à M. de Beaumont.*

> Negative [he said], I call that education which strives to make perfect the organs of our understanding before it conveys us true understanding, and which prepares for reason by exercising the senses. Negative education does not mean idleness—on the contrary. It does not inculcate virtue but it prevents vice; it does not teach truth but it preserves from going astray. It makes the child fit for everything that can lead it to the truth when it becomes able to understand the truth, and to the good when it becomes able to love the good.

One can readily see how *Émile* would bring on a sharp clash with the Church. The Church felt itself struck in its most sensitive spot, namely, its influence on the children. The goodness of nature contradicts original sin; negative education excludes the early religious influence, and in so far as education is to be directed by people, these people should not be the clergy. In his pastoral letter, the Archbishop of Paris commented on these points with indignation.

Rousseau preferred to leave the child to itself or to *nature's own education*, which consists only in the gradual growth and maturing of organs and faculties, and to the *education of things* which consists of the experiences of the child on being stimulated by the surrounding world. But on account of the ruinous and complicated conditions into which the child arrives, and in which he grows up to the state of civilization, there is need also of an *education from men*, an education that is, as said, chiefly of a negative sort, since it otherwise would hinder or vitiate the natural development.

Here we see an analogy between Rousseau's main ideas ("amour de soi," relativity) and his special problems. Within the religious problem the religious feeling corresponded to the need of unfolding of the self ("amour de soi"), and it was external, artificial conditions that let the religious spirit appear as dogma and sect. Within the social-political problem the common will of the people, "volonté générale," stood as opposed to the actual state authorities, both to the peculiar will of the government and to the sum of individual wills (volonté de tous) which operates in the assembly. Within the pedagogical problem, finally, it is the child's education, according to nature, that counts, and the task is to keep away all impressions and conditions that do not further the natural unfolding. Everywhere is in evidence Rousseau's great faith in, and his great caution before, life's original stream; though we might dig channels for this stream, no ceremony, no legislation, and no teaching can cause its flow to begin. A Finnish proverb says that deep springs do not run dry. Such springs were the inner religious life, the people's life, the child's life for Rousseau. He believed in their inexhaustibility—but he feared lest they should be muddied.

There is a special relation between Rousseau's educational theory and his criticism of society. He criticized the existing social conditions because the division of labor makes each person a fraction instead of a particular harmoniously developed entity. The aim of education is, after all, to make the person a unit, a whole being, able then to find its place within society, the larger whole. The child is to learn first and foremost to live, *to feel life:* "Live," said Rousseau, "that is not just to breathe, but to function, to use our organs, our senses, our faculties, all parts of our self that give us the feeling of our existence."[1]

The necessity of the negative education is based not only on the necessity of withholding hindrances but also on the fact that from the start we do not know the child's nature. One should, therefore, remain an observer and expectant so that nature can find its own expression. On account of the individual differences in children's natures the understanding of the single child comes all the harder, and one and the same system of education will not do for them all. One should, therefore, let the child's own natural impulse and feeling, as much as possible, express itself and point the way one should follow.

At this point the relation between Rousseau and his nearest predecessor in the field of pedagogy, John Locke, appears clear. Rousseau follows Locke's ideas in many respects—nor does he conceal the fact. Locke had already demanded a natural education.[2] He spoke against educating through general rules and commands offered the child from without and maintained by rewards and punishments. His pedagogy is a part of his general fight against belief in authority and dogmatism. He demands that the child be allowed full freedom to use its powers and follow its desires where no harm will be done. The faults that are those of childhood and not the child's own are to be left to time to mend, and character is to be formed unconsciously through conscious exercise. This procedure, says Locke, has so many advantages that it is a wonder that it is not applied oftener. Among these advantages one particularly deserves stress, that what we demand of the child suits its aptitude and nature—"for these also are to be considered in a good education."[1] We must not expect to transform the children's natural character and force another on them. We must, therefore, carefully examine their nature and by experiment discover in what direction their aptitude lies; in many cases we cannot do anything else but obtain the very best possible out of what nature has given, and prepare against the faults toward which there is most inclination. What Locke discusses as something which "also" is to be considered is with Rousseau the first and last fundamental; and what Locke thinks true "in many cases" is with Rousseau the only thing there can be any sensible talk of. Rousseau has here dug deeper, though Locke showed him where he should dig. The idea of negative education marks an essential turning point in relation to the earlier pedagogy, and here Locke represents only the significant precursor.

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[1] *Émile,* I.

[2] *Some Thoughts Concerning Education,* 1690.

Negative education is a difficult art; it demands not only understanding of the child's peculiarity but demands also much labor to arrange the conditions aright—a labor that should in nowise be noticed. The art is: "tout faire en ne faisant rien"! The educator must be omnipresent without the child's noticing that he is about. The child must believe that it follows its own will though it actually does nothing but what the educator intends it shall do. Yes, the child must not open its mouth without the educator's knowing what it will say—so well must he know it and so well must he have anticipated everything. The educator is to merge himself completely with the child so that the child shall merge itself completely with whatever undertaking lies before it. It must not notice that the educator stands ever between it and things. Great activity, a high power of self-control, are needed for a good teacher. It is no wonder that Rousseau advised a young man who had become enthusiastic upon reading *Émile*, not to make a trial of that calling.

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[1] Paragraph 66.

From sheer zeal to be natural, Rousseau's theory of education often becomes exceedingly artificial. We are irritated by this tutor who is forever interfering, over his conceit and over his interventions, not always of a negative sort. Rousseau's description seems finally in bad taste when he has the tutor even direct the process of Émile's love story, yes, even have him take charge after the wedding and in everything but a "negative" way give advice concerning the most intimate things.

However, we should keep to the main current in Rousseau and ignore the Rococo style in which he often decorates the banks of the river. He makes sacrifices at the altar of the times, however far he may be beyond the times in many respects.

If Rousseau found a steward necessary who completely devoted himself to the single child, it was because he feared that the child's individuality would be suppressed in school instruction. As conditions were, he regarded public education as an impossibility. Herein his pedagogical system became somewhat aristocratic, like that of Montaigne and Locke, who also thought of education as applied to the single child. And the means to education, especially to the development of individuality, which comes from life in the family and with companions, cease. The steward is to represent the whole generation to the child, and this is too great a task, too great a responsibility for the single person. Rousseau demands an education "without prejudices"; but everybody has his prejudices, and it is a profitable school in which a child learns that not all people have the same prejudices; it helps it gradually to become independent. In the meanwhile the steward in *Émile* is to be considered as belonging to the outer framework of the system rather than as an essential element. The essential thing for Rousseau was, as we have already noticed, to make prevail the gospel of childhood, to protect the years of childhood from being considered merely as a period of preparation.

Rousseau loved the child, though in a certain sense it was an unhappy love. His own children he had put away, and he had blundered with the education of others. But all the greater were his love and wisdom later. He understood the child well and contributed to the psychology of childhood. He stresses, for instance, the important part played by the need for motion and its direct expression in the development of the child. Through its unconscious movements the child has experiences it otherwise would not have. Through self-impelled ways it learns lessons clearer and firmer than those which people with their stories and precepts would be able to provide it. This advantage it gains, too, that body and soul are developed simultaneously.

> Since he is constantly in motion he is compelled to observe many things and to recognize many effects; he acquires early a wide experience: he gets his lessons from nature and not from men; he teaches himself all the better because he senses nowhere any intention to teach him. Thus his body and his mind are exercised together. Acting always according to his own thought, and not according to that of another person, he is continually combining two operations; the stronger and the more robust he feels the more good sense and judiciousness he acquires.[1]

We teach the children so many things they could better teach themselves. The child teaches itself to walk, and by interfering too much one can easily impose on it a bad carriage. The activity announces itself when the time is right. The unconscious movements, as Rousseau shows concretely, are significant in the development of the various senses, especially sight and touch.

> One must have compared vision to touch for some time before acquiring the habit of accurate report from sight of shapes and distances: without touch, without movement in progression, the sharpest eyes in the world would not be able to give us the least idea of extent. . . . It is only by dint of walking, of touching, of counting, of measuring, that one learns to estimate them [shapes and distances].

In this doctrine of the perception of space, which hardly seems defensible psychologically,[2] Rousseau is following his friend, the philosopher Condillac (*Traité*

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[1] *Émile,* II.

[2] Cf. my *Psykologi,* VC, pp. 6–10.

des sensations, III: "Comment le toucher apprendaux autres sens à juger des objets extérieurs"), from whom he departs so emphatically, otherwise, in his psychology. In his emphasis on unconscious movements he anticipates views held later, especially by Alexander Bain and William Preyer. The child's strong need for motion explains for Rousseau a great deal that is generally blamed on the child; for instance, that it cannot keep still, and that it is so fond of destroying and tearing up. The joy in destruction comes from the need to use his strength and the desire to feel himself doing something; since it is more difficult and takes longer to produce than to destroy, it is only natural that the instinct for activity spends itself rather in this way. Yet Rousseau is in no way a blind worshiper of the child. He is very skeptical about juvenile cleverness; he suggests that since children chatter so much, for the need of motion expresses itself also through the muscles of the voice, it is not strange that now and then they hit upon striking observations. Besides, the child's comprehension is quite different from the adult's; for the child the point is often not what the adult finds. Rousseau tells an amusing story about a little boy who won his teachers' and his parents' admiration by the most interesting way in which he could relate how Alexander the Great drank the cup his physician offered him, after the physician had been accused of wishing to poison him: on closer questioning it appeared that what the boy admired was the intrepidity with which Alexander drank the bitter medicine, for which the young story-teller had from experience a great aversion.

In the rules which Rousseau lays down for the treatment of the child in its early years, he follows especially the work of the physician Desessartz, which had just then been published. But he was able to get a hearing for many prescriptions that had often been tried out, by his vivid presentation, and by the relationship he established between them and the whole gospel of nature. He maintained the child's natural right to the milk of its mother and he made breast-feeding fashionable. He maintained the right of children to free movement of their limbs and he railed against swathing and restraint. He cautioned against allowing the child to talk too early, lest it get more words than thoughts. The principle is that one must await the point at which an activity becomes natural through the awakening of impulse and interest. Only then can it occur with pleasure, and if an emotion is not set up the result will be only miserable. The child shall not learn to read and write before it feels impulse and desire to do so. The important thing is that the child shall come into immediate contact with actual things in the world. Reality, reality, exclaims Rousseau, not books and not sermons! And let the need for reflection, that implies an abundance of strength beyond what is needed for nutrition and growth, evolve gradually, and do not awaken it too early. Do not give the child ready-made instruments but teach it to construct the instruments it uses. Let it be as self-active as possible—also in the study of the various sciences!

But Rousseau had no intention of indulging and spoiling the child. Nature itself practices through pain.

Let the child cry if the crying is evidently not due to any special need that requires satisfaction. Teach it to stand the cold and to lie on hard pillows. Only through hardening is the child freed; the more eagerly you protect and spoil it, the more dependent you make it. Freedom is the greatest good, and to make the period of childhood an independent period of life the powers must reach their full development. The aim is to bring the child's existence to the full maturity appropriate for that period.

Rousseau would prolong as far as possible the period of childhood. Let time be wasted rather than that the development be hastened. He is particularly fearful of awakening the imaginative power too soon, and that, in turn, feelings and passions be awakened that are proper only to a later stage. This is a specific application of Rousseau's general theory of civilization: the power of imagination put an end to the spontaneity and harmony of the state of nature by conjuring up new possibilities. And it is at the same time an outcome of his own hard-bought experience, for his own imagination and feelings were stirred exceptionally early. To escape the dangers that might ensue from this, he cuts the knot by postponing the development of imagination and feelings to adolescence. He favors marking time and not allowing the imagination and emotions to develop until the individual is in a position to judge clearly and aright of all situations it may find itself in.

This is perhaps the most dubious point in Rousseau's theory of education, a point in which he contradicts himself, since he insists upon the very importance and the independence of the emotions. Negative education should only provide the nourishment and development for the feeling and imagination proper to the stage of the child's development; yet Rousseau would cut these off from all nourishment. Herein his reaction to his own past, and also the sophistry of his own doctrines, carried him too far.

Rousseau feared particularly that the effect of the premature development of the imagination would be a premature development of the sex instinct. It is developed too early among civilized peoples, he thought. And they suffer from still another difficulty, that even when the instinct appears at the natural time, social conditions do not permit of marriage at so early an age. Here then is a double misfit of civilization and nature. The question arises now, how this difficult problem is to be faced pedagogically. Nature is not to be subdued, but the natural powers and impulses might be diverted and utilized in other service than that for which the instinct is intended. Rousseau's opinion is that the time has now come when the emotional life can and should attain its complete flowering. One should use the strong impulses that now are in ferment (*la sensibilité naissante*) to awaken feeling for other beings,—sympathy, gentleness, magnanimity. Youth is, in contrast to childhood, the right time for the birth of these feelings. Instead of allowing the awakening sexual instinct to proceed directly toward its goal, one should turn the state of excitement which it arouses toward the joys and sorrows of other people, and teach the youth to forget himself through others. When we reflect that Rousseau conceived of sympathy as the overflow and extension of the need of self-assertion ("amour de soi"), we can understand how for him the sexual instinct—in its first vague stirrings—is of great account in this development. Rousseau is aiming at two things at once: the development of the human sympathies and the balancing of the sexual instinct. Religious emotion can, too, develop now; this is the point in *Émile* when the Savoyard Vicar's confessions are inserted. It, too, is a strong and elevated emotion capable at once of drawing nourishment from the mental excitement aroused in adolescence and also of serving as a check to it.

But Rousseau considers an ennobling of the sexual instinct not only in this indirect way. One should transform the blind instinct into noble emotion, into true love; and for this are needed admiration and enthusiasm. The youth must form an ideal of a person of the other sex. There must be raised "a throne in the heart," about which are gathered the thoughts and enthusiasms, so that sensuality and imagination are kept from falling a prey to animal promptings. We find the knights-errant ridiculous, says Rousseau; still they knew love—we know hardly more than licentiousness!

Since no power or prompting will be active before nature asserts itself—or, in other words, since care will have been taken that the outer and inner circumstances correspond, there will be no danger that the youth, having outlived childhood, will avenge himself on the compulsion he was obliged to submit to for so long. The period of youth will not become a reaction to the period of childhood. The natural education that makes the period of childhood an independent period of life with its own goal, will likewise also make it a preparation for the life to follow. The continuity of the whole life is best preserved by allowing each separate part of life to come into its full right.

Here was a great ideal that Rousseau outlined, but an ideal to which all hopes of progress and harmony in life point, and it is a measuring rod consciously to be applied in every pedagogical and social reform. In his fight for nature, which is likewise a fight for freedom, Rousseau has shifted the burden of the proof: it falls upon those now who would impose restrictions and hindrances upon the free and natural unfolding of the powers, and not upon those who assert the right to this unfolding. In *Émile*, as he said, he presented more than a system of pedagogy; he presented there the first principles of a doctrine of personality. He asserted the true conditions of the personal life against the Enlightenment and against the arrogance and conceit of Orthodoxy. This earns for him a position in the moral development of the eighteenth century in France like that of Lessing in the corresponding period in Germany. But Rousseau's influence is far deeper and more far-reaching than Lessing's.

We should not leave Rousseau's scheme of education without calling attention to two vital limitations that lessen its historical importance.

The nature, temperament, and character of woman, according to Rousseau, are quite different from man's. She requires therefore an education quite different from his. But on this Rousseau can express himself, as he says, briefly: while he uses four books to expound the male education, he uses but one[1] to expound the female —and this describes also Émile's courtship and marriage. The education of woman is determined by the goal that nature has set for her of becoming wife and mother. The virtues she needs most are willingness to learn and mildness. Of independent intellectual and religious development she has no use, nor has she capacity for them. The female intelligence is practical: the woman can find means for a goal but cannot find the goal itself. She has "l'esprit des détails," whereas man's task is to go back to the principles. The faith of a woman is a faith on authority. As a young girl she has her mother's religion, and as wife her husband's religion.

Nevertheless, Rousseau attributes to woman "a natural talent to rule over man," and he finds no contradiction in this.

> There is a considerable difference between arrogating to one's self the right to command and controlling the one who commands. The rule of woman is a rule of mildness, of tact, and of amiability; her commands are caresses, her threats are tears. She should rule in the home like a minister in the state, in getting herself bidden to do what she wishes to do.

Rousseau hardly succeeded, however, in clearing away the contradiction; for the great practical influence he attributes to woman becomes a very questionable one if she cannot go through an independent spiritual development that allows her to gain insight, at first hand, into the "aims" as well as the "means," into the "principles" as well as the "details."[1] And if Rousseau had followed the same procedure with women that he demands for the child, namely, getting to know thoroughly its special nature before formulating rules for its education, he would have found also in her, talents and needs that had a right to development. In his conception of woman, which has not unjustly been called "oriental," he observed the social condition of his time instead of referring to nature. And besides, he was influenced by his aversion to "la femme bel esprit": "An intellectual woman is a scourge to her husband, her children, her friends, her servants—to everybody." A hundred years after the publication of the *Émile*, John Stuart Mill applied Rousseau's fundamental idea concerning the right of nature as against civilization, to the position of woman in intellectual and social concerns.

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[1] *Émile,* V.

The other limitation of Rousseau's theory of education lies in the sentence: "The poor man needs no education; for his state is a compulsory one; and he can obtain no other."[2] Rousseau, therefore, presupposes that his Émile is of a wealthy and independent family. This is an apparently aristocratic trait to be found in a man who is so often without question called the prophet of democracy. On this point, Pestalozzi continued Rousseau's work, in that—led on by genuine sympathy for the spiritual need of the common people—he applied Rousseau's principles to the education of

[1] Cf. my *Etik*, XIX, 3–5.

[2] *Émile*, I.

the common people. Especially through Pestalozzi and Basedow were the pedagogical ideas of Rousseau assimilated by the system of education in the period which followed.

And so we see that even where Rousseau stopped, a power resided in his ideas that led onward. In that deep spring he opened, there was a greater surge than he ever imagined.

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